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Miss America

## Books by Alexander Black.

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# MISS AMERICA

## PEN AND CAMERA SKETCHES OF THE AMERICAN GIRL

BY

ALEXANDER BLACK

*Author of "Miss Jerry," etc.*

*WITH DESIGNS AND PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK: *MDCCCXCIX*

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TO

*THE AMERICAN GIRL WHOM*
*I HAVE KNOWN BEST*

MY WIFE

*THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY*
*AND AFFECTIONATELY*
*DEDICATED*

# The Apology:

*It will be suspected, perhaps, that in saying "sketches," I have wished to escape some of the responsibility which might have been incurred by a more formal approach to a momentous theme, though the entire truth of the description should carry its own justification. And if the term be permitted in describing the text, it has equal appropriateness in describing the pictures; for the photograph seldom can be more than a sketch, and must be content with the limitations as well as with the privileges of the sketch. The feminine eye will discern unaided by data the*

*chronological range of my pictures. To other eyes, possibly, I should explain that the portraits represent a period of six or seven years, and that those in conventional dress are supplemented by various costume sketches with the camera recalling eras in which there was no photography. What I have said of the American type in the first chapter will explain my own difficulty in expressing the American type by the aid of the lens, a difficulty which has not been diminished by the privilege of wide travel. If I have not revealed the geographical identity of any of the types reflected here, the reservation may, I hope, seem to be as fully justified as certain other reservations which the American girl herself so frequently chooses to hold.*

*I often have wished that it were easier to substitute for "American" some name which should more specifically indicate the United States. It is the United States girl I am talking about; it is the United States spirit which I have sought to discover, and not the spirit of the wider America of which the foreigner, and even the British foreigner, so frequently, and so reasonably, seems to be thinking when he uses the name "American." Now that Miss America for the first time has seen her soldier brothers go abroad to fight and to conquer, it may be that in one way or another there will be a further modification of the term, in which direction it would be difficult to say at this hour.*

*Because this is an apology and not a mere preface, I may be permitted, I hope,*

*to express to the American girls in various States of the Union, from Boston to San Antonio, who have sat before my camera, my regret that I should have translated them so inadequately. It would, indeed, be hard to do justice to the American girl, and one well might hesitate to describe, or even to discuss her, were not her always gracious generosity so safely to be looked for.*

*A. B.*

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# I

## THE AMERICAN TYPE

THE tradition that the women of the region in which we live illustrate all of those traits that give an abiding charm to the sex, is one that sometimes may be unreasonable, perhaps even comic; yet it cannot be discreditable. Balzac, who remarks somewhere that nothing unites men so much as a certain conformity of view in the matter of women, may seem unphilosophical when he remarks somewhere else upon the absurdity of English women. His French antipathy has an unreasonably affirmative sting. But we do not care how many Thackerays regard the English girl as the bright particular flower of creation. We like and expect the author

of "The Newcomes" to say: "I think it is not national prejudice which makes me believe that a high-bred English lady is the most complete of all Heaven's subjects in this world." For the same reason we delight in N. P. Willis's confidence when he declares that "there is no such beautiful work under the sky as an American girl in her bellehood." And Mr. Willis adds with the same whimsical consciousness of national partiality: "I *think* I am not prejudiced."

Of course this instinctive preference is fundamental. We are prepared to hear from science that the African savage prefers the thick lips and flat nose of the African girl to any other sort; that this is why the African girl has a flat nose and thick lips; that gallantry is a phase of natural selection, and so on. We can understand that there is a merely relative difference of attitude between the savage lover who woos his lady with a club, and the modern suitor who swears to give up all of his clubs for her sake. What perplexes us is our anxiety to explain our modern instinct, and (what is more perplexing) our anxiety to explain *her;* to ascertain and even to catalogue her essential traits — to discover, if not why we prefer the American girl, at least what manner of girl it is that we thus are instinctively preferring.

What is the American type? Is the typical American girl as the British novelist so often has described her — rich, noisy, wasp-waisted and slangy? Is she a "Daisy Miller" or a "Fair Barbarian"? Is she

what Richard Grant White feared she too often was, "a creature composed in equal parts of mind and leather"? Is she Emerson's "Fourth of July of Zoology," or is she illustrating the discovery which Irving claimed to have made among certain philosophers "that all animals degenerate in America and man among the number"?

From those foreigners who make a Cook's tour examination of us, the evidence in favor of the proposition that we grow more pretty and witty women to the acre than any other country in the world, is overwhelming. But there are obvious reasons why we must distrust this foreign comment. Too often it plainly is a propitiatory item, when it is not illustrating a flippant wish among men writers to occupy Disraeli's position "on the side of the angels." That traveller has a profound distaste for a country who does not find that it has pretty women.

If anything is more inevitable than this, it is that the traveller will find fault with the type preferred

by the men of the country he is visiting. "What is most amazing," says the observer in Zululand or elsewhere, "is that the prettiest women, the women without this or that hideous deformity, are not admired by the men." The Kaffir prince on a visit to England, or the Apache chief among the pale-faces in the city of the Great Father, invariably are astounded at the obtuseness of the white men. I remember once listening to a group of New York artists who were discussing preferred types of women, and it was agreed, with a hopeless and resentful unanimity, that most New Yorkers preferred fat women, since most of the good clothes and diamonds were worn by fat women. All of which goes to show, perhaps, that natural selection is an exclusive affair.

Probably even patriotism does not demand of us an admiration for the beauty of the very first American girls — the dusky darlings of our primitive tribes. These earliest American girls were not dowered with the fatal gift of beauty as we understand beauty. Indeed, it is quite generally admitted that the American Indian girl is not and never was so pretty as the girls of some of the Pacific islands, for example. Far be it from me to attack any precious traditions concerning the red man, or the red woman, either. Far be it from me to touch with impious hand the romantic panoply of Pocahontas. I am not writing a scientific treatise. I have no point to prove. It is quite possible that there is something distinctive in the

personality of the Indian girl, whether she be as poetry has painted her or as she stands in the analysis of science. If I pass her by it is in no spirit of partisanship toward either view. She is an old story, and some day when she is a new story we may have occasion for surprise.

The fact is that I must content myself here with a glance at the American girl of more recent times, though she also will seem to be an old story if we permit ourselves to remember the number of things which have been said. We are not likely to forget the unction with which foreign visitors sketched the daughters of Colonial America. Indeed, we are in a measure dependent upon those sketches for a knowledge of these ancestral daughters. As in all judgments of remote appearances, we here must lean upon mere opinion. There was no camera in the days of Priscilla, nor in the days of Dolly Madison, and painted portraiture, unchallenged by the photograph, had reached heights of admirable gallantry. For purposes of pictorial reconstruction we have an enthusiastic description, the dubious confessions of a diary, a charming little miniature or a mellowing canvas in an old frame, a quaint gown, wrinkled by time; but we have no photograph. I hear the Romanticist mutter, "Thank Heaven for *that!*" Alas! the photograph is an expert witness, and how he can disagree! Was ever any human specialist on the witness stand so dogmatic, so insinuating, so sophistical as the photograph? Who, without an obstinately anthropological mind, shall regret

that the beginnings of our national life are veiled in the Ante-Photographic era — that we may invest them with qualities we wish they might have had, as well as with those qualities of which we think we know? Who shall say that humanity, A. P., dwelling in a softening haze beyond the harshly illuminated era of Realism, is worse off than humanity thereafter? Looking at the matter practically, who shall regret that Lady Washington never had her pretty head in a vise, her face masked a ghastly white with powder to make her countenance more actinic, and her eyes instructed to glare at a fixed point for upward of sixty mortal seconds! Surely there are some compensations in being handed down like the Iliad or the masonic ritual by word of mouth rather than by agencies associated with the arrogant stare of the lens.

But, after all, we do not conduct the trial wholly with expert witnesses, and the camera has been a useful commentator — perhaps we are more willing to say that it will be than that it has been, though we never shall surpass in delicately literal perfection the image of the daguerreotype. A new confusion may arise from the fact that photography wants to be more than a science — is tired of being literal, and seeks to be an art. If it shall become an art — that is to say, an agency of personal opinion — posterity must, like ourselves, go on being influenced in its judgments of pictorial fact by the expressions of art, which the world has been doing from the beginning of time.

Certainly it would be very hard for us to think of the English girl, for example, however well we might know her personally, without feeling the

influence of the English artists, of Romney, and Reynolds, and Sir John Millais, and Sir Frederick Leighton, and the multitudinous expressions of her from the pencil of the author of "Trilby." Du

Maurier's English girl is an image, agreeable or not according to one's taste, which we cannot get out of our minds. A number of years before he achieved a second fame by writing romances, Du Maurier made a sketch in which he undertook to indicate his idea of a pretty woman. He wrote of his ideal at that time: "She is rather tall, I admit, and a trifle stiff; but English women *are* tall and stiff just now; and she is rather too serious; but that is only because I find it so difficult, with a mere stroke of black ink, to indicate the enchanting little curved lines that go from the nose to the mouth corners, causing the cheeks to make a smile — and without them the smile is incomplete." I always have been glad to hear Mr. Ruskin say of the Venus of Melos, with her "tranquil, regular and lofty features," that she "could not hold her own for a moment against the beauty of a simple English girl, of pure race and kind heart."

And in the same way our notion of the American girl, of the typical American girl, is inevitably affected by the pictures we see of her. Our illustrators naturally have the best opportunity to mould our judgments in this matter. I recall hearing one woman say of another at a tea: "That girl is

always sitting around in Gibson poses." They used to say the same thing in England of the girls who imitated Du Maurier. Thus we see that the illustrator of life not only is reflecting but creating forms and manners; and if you would know not merely what the American girl is, but what she is going to be, study the picture-makers and story-makers who influence her.

Mr. Gibson would have us believe that Miss America is essentially a statuesque girl, that, in general, there are good chances that she will be tall, commanding, well-dressed, rather English in the shoulders. Mr. Wenzell and Mr. Smedley present her to us as more willowy, with more of what, if we had to go abroad for a prototype, we should be obliged to call French grace and lightness. We have been

under the spell of the girl Castaigne can draw, have enjoyed the dainty femininity pictured by Toaspern and Sterner and Mrs. Stephens. None

has grudged a flattering stroke, a prophetic outline. It is the old story. If we are to measure a nation's civilization by the degree of its deference to women, we surely shall find much to confuse us in art, which in all lands, like some joyous, enthusiastic child,

always has heaped unstinted homage at the feet of its goddesses, its Madonnas, its Magdalens and its nymphs; which always has been ready to give to its fruit-venders and flower-girls in the market-place the same refined beauty it bestows upon its princesses; which has made its Pandoras beautiful with no sign of resentment for any mischief its Pandoras ever may have done, grateful only for the privilege of saying to the world as to her precious private self, that she is very charming indeed. Germany, while sending women to the plough, paints her radiantly as a deity, and when England was selling wives at the end of a halter in the market-place, there was no abatement in the ardor of her artistic tributes to feminine loveliness.

While the American artist has painted Miss America appreciatively, with an enthusiasm creditable alike to his art and to his patriotism, and seldom, surely, in the spirit of one who could say, "she *is* rather stiff just now," unquestionably, like the rest of us, he has been bothered at times by the fact that she is so various, that she has so many pictorial as well as temperamental and (may I say) vocal variations.

There are several reasons why she should be various. The "Mayflower" was a small ship and could not hold all of our ancestors. Like the English who followed after the Conqueror, some of our ancestors had to be content to "come over" at a later time, some of them at a shockingly recent date. Thus we have greater divergences in type

than exist in countries wherein the "coming over" process was neither so protracted nor from so many points of the compass. The American girl blossoms like the pansy in so many and in such unexpected shades and combinations that science falters, and bewildered art, determined to paint types that will "stay put," bolts for Brittany and sulkily draws sabots and the Norman nose. We are a vast anthropological department store in which the polite sociological clerk will show you human goods, not only in the primary colors, but in every conceivable tint and texture; and when you ask him, Is this foreign or domestic? he lies to meet the requirements. Yes, Miss America sometimes, like our cotton, "comes over" a second time with a foreign label, which *is* puzzling!

It is our habit to think that the American girl of English ancestry presents precisely the right modification of the — what shall I call it? — austerity of the purely English type, and which scorns the melancholy of Burne-Jones and Rossetti. The American girl of German parents is conspicuously with us, and very often is found supplying a fascinatingly fair phase without which our galaxy scarcely would be complete, adding a delightful sparkle to the demureness which we might not find so modified in Berlin or Bremen. The American girl of French parentage is found uniting the traits of the people which has produced De Staël, and Récamier and George Sand, to the perhaps not greatly different vivacity of l'Américaine. We trace the auburn

tresses of the Scottish lass, the teasing Irish eyes, the winsome oval of the Dutch face. We see the too emphatic contrasts of the Spanish, the Italian and the Russian types mellowed and refined; while Oriental blood, the civilized African, the octoroon and the occasional Asiatic each add an element of picturesque variety.

And this is not saying a word about the differentiating fact that this is a big country, and that Miss America in one section is by no means the same as Miss America in another. I do not mean to say that when we meet her in or from Boston we always know her by sight, but when we come to average her in that neighborhood we are able to see clearly enough that her quality is distinctive, that it is different from the quality of Miss America elsewhere — in New York, for example, where, by a trivial tradition, she is supposed to lay less stress upon intellectuality, but where, under whatever guise of habit or manner, you will find that she knows enough and has what she knows sufficiently at her command to make you nervous. Again, the Philadelphia girl upsets your preconceived notions, if you are foolish enough to have these, by being nothing that suggests even remote relationship to the bronze Quaker on the municipal tower. It is the familiar joke that the Boston girl asks what you know, that the New York girl asks what you own, and that the Philadelphia girl asks who your grandfather was. If this amiable satire should have any foundation in fact, I wonder what the Chicago girl

is expected to ask. I myself have a theory, not wholly dissociated from experience, that she does not ask anything, being content to know that she, personifying the great traditionless middle west, has been called the hardest riddle of them all.

And, as I have said, we must admit that geography has much to do with the case. Does any one deny that climate and history have made the Kentucky girl a being apart — that the Kentucky horses which she has ridden with so much spirit have had their effect in her whole style and personality? Could we fail to look for a distinctive flowering in the verdant slopes beyond the Sierras or amid that intensely American human environment on the plains of Texas? Have you heard the Creole sing? Have you heard the music of the Georgia girl's talk? Have you ever let a Virginia girl drive you, or danced with Miss Maryland?

A southern dance! Perhaps it is inevitable that we should find ourselves thinking of the Continental and early Federal society; of old Georgetown and the powdered heads, and the minuet, and the blinking candles behind the darkey orchestra; of the clinking swords of the young Revolutionary soldiers, and the satin breeches of the foreign lordlings, studying the precocious young republic and the young republic's daughters: of the quaint gowns Miss America used to wear, and the taunting little caps and head-dresses, reflecting now the whimsies of the Empire, now the furbelows of the Restoration, and always her engagingly different

self. Yes, time is working its wizard tricks up and down the land, slowly here and quickly there, now (as it might seem) in a romantic spirit, and again in brusque paradoxical contrast to the thing we expect.

We live quickly hereabouts, and to say that the vast changes which have taken place in our national life have been mostly external is not to say that the spectacle is on that account any easier to understand. In an especial degree social situation with us, like the age limit defining old maids, is wholly relative, subject to continual change. To the foreign spectator who ignores this relativity, the American girl naturally is bewildering, and we are likely to find her typified in foreign comment in the words which Schlegel irreverently applied to Portia, as a "rich, beautiful, clever heiress." No, the typical American girls are not all heiresses, nor all cow-camp heroines. They were not always demure in the colonies, nor are they always disconcertingly self-possessed in our own time. The girls with whom Lafayette went sled-riding on the Newburg hills do not actually appear to have been amazingly different from those who teased the Prince of Wales in the fifties (I mean *our* fifties), nor from those who sent in their cards to Li Hung Chang in the nineties. It is very shocking to us moderns, who let women preach and plead and vote, to learn of the number of elopements in the days when women were theoretically tethered to the spinning-wheel and forbidden everything but hypoc-

risy. Which is to say, perhaps, that how much we shall regard as distinctive in the modern woman may depend upon how little we happen to know of the woman who has gone before.

But time and place must leave their mark, and Miss America, though she be like changeable silk, of varying hue in varying lights, is undoubtedly, being the precocious product of a new era in new territory, a new variety in the species, as new as if she were grotesquely instead of subtly different. And in her presence the American himself frequently seems to be awed and quelled, like the Greek hero when Athena's "dreadful eyes shone upon him." His devotion to her has excited derision; his deference has been misconstrued, his boastful admiration has been catalogued as characteristic. Italy once spoke of England as "the paradise of women"; and England in a later day began to say the same thing about the United States, which may or may not have something to do with the "star of empire," and probably, in any case, has some definite relation to the Anglo-Saxon spirit, concerning which so much has been said of late. As for Miss America herself, the sovereignty at which the foreign observer marvels is a real appearance, however profound the misapprehension of its philosophy. Miss America is no illusion, if some spectators have doubted their senses.

By the grace of nature she is that she is. If the American man continues to pay her the supreme compliment of not understanding her, that is his

affair. It always is easier to perceive the other's folly than our own — especially when the exciting

cause is a woman. We know better than the spectator why *we* permit certain seeming tyrannies! We analyze the American girl in a purely Pick-

wickian spirit, not because we expect actually to discover facts, but for the immediate pleasure of the speculation. We neither seek nor assume to comprehend this marvellous organism. We know better. When we pretend to delineate the American girl it is in the spirit of Fielding's aside in "Tom Jones": "We mention this observation not with any view of pretending to account for so odd a behavior, but lest some critic should hereafter plume himself on discovering it."

## II

## THE TWIG

AS I said one day to the Professor —

But first I must tell you about the Professor. She is a young woman — young even in an era that classes authors among the "younger writers" until they are sixty, and is pushing the "proper age at which to marry" into the period of severe and undebatable maturity. She is young, but she exemplifies that educated precocity tolerated and fostered by our era. She knows the past like a book and the present like a man. She does not vulgarly bristle with knowledge like the first products of the higher education. Her acquirements sit upon her less like starched linen than like a silken gown that flows

with the figure. She is the educated woman in her "second manner," as the art critics would say. I do not know what the educated woman's third manner will be. No one acquainted with the charms of the Professor could help hoping that there never would be any.

The Professor graduated and post-graduated. She pottered in laboratories, and at certain intervals wholly disappeared into the very abysses of science. She read law tentatively, and made a feint at going into medicine, but was deterred in each case, I fancy, by the fact, repugnant to her exuberant energy, that a practice had to grow and could not be mastered ready made. At one time there were both hopes and fears that she would enter the ministry. Those who hoped banked on her earnestness and wisdom. Those who feared quailed before her ruthless independence and sense of humor. She delighted in the paradox of not scorning social life, welcoming Emerson's admonition with regard to solitude and society by keeping her head in one and her hands in the other. Indeed, she dances remarkably well when we consider that here the dexterity is so far removed from the brain, and I have seen her swim like — a mermaid, I suppose. She took a long course in cookery for the pleasure of more pungently abusing certain of her lecture audiences. One day when the plumbers did n't come I saw her actually "wipe a joint" in lead pipe with her own hands. Heaven knows where she picked *that* up!

When she accepted the position at the Academy, doubtless it was with a view to certain liberties of action in the sociological direction. She was not quite through with the college settlement idea, and I suspect that she had a feeling that city politics at close range might be productive to her in certain ways. Because she is neither erratic nor formidable, she has experienced various offers of marriage, and has shed them all without visible disturbance. Just at present, panoplied in learning, tingling with modernity, yet always charmingly unconscious of her power, she stands, poised and easy, like a sparrow on a live wire.

In other words the Professor is one of those rare women with whom you may enjoy the delights of a purely impersonal quarrel. She can wrangle affectionately and cleave you in twain with a tender sisterly smile. Indeed, she can make you feel of intellectual fisticuffs, and, notwithstanding an occasional effect of too greatly accentuated excitement, that it is, on the whole, a superior pleasure. And you arise again conscious that she has no greater immediate grudge against you than against St. Paul or any other of her historical opponents.

One day I asked the Professor, not with any controversial inflection, what she thought of Herbert Spencer, a bachelor, talking about the rearing of children.

"Well," said the Professor, "it certainly is no more absurd than the spectacle of Herbert Spencer analyzing love, or Ernest Renan doing the same thing."

"Mind you," I went on, "I don't say that the unmarried may not discuss with entire competency —"

"I hope not," interrupted the Professor. "I hope you would n't say any such absurd thing. Must a man have robbed a bank to write intelligently of penology?"

"My point is," I went on—the Professor and I never take the slightest offence at each other's interruptions—"my point is that it almost seems at times as if the unmarried should, in such an emergency, assume, if they did not feel, a certain diffidence. To tell you the truth, Professor, if it were not for you, I should doubt whether the unmarried had a developed sense of humor."

"That is simply pitiful," flung the Professor. "Can you not see that it is a sense of humor that keeps many people from marrying? But that is not the point. Who is better fitted than Mr.

Spencer, who has enjoyed freedom from an entangling alliance, who is unbiased by social situation or personal obligation, to discuss with scientific judiciality the problems of child-rearing?"

"Theoretically, Professor, that is all right. But when Mr. Spencer advises more sugar, it is awfully hard to forget that Mr. Spencer never, presumably never, sat up nights with a youngster who had the toothache. It is all very well for Mr. Spencer to suggest that when a child craves more sugar it probably needs more sugar, but the parent who manages his offspring on that basis is going to lose sleep. A good rule, if you will permit me a platitude, is a rule that works. The way that children *should* be brought up is the way they *can* be brought up."

"My friend," said the Professor —

Now, I am several years older than the Professor. By sheer age I am entitled to her deference; but the Professor can ignore years as well as sex or previous condition of servitude. Her impersonality is adjusted to time, to space, and to matter. I am simply a Person.

"My friend," said the Professor, "it is another platitude that there is a right way to do everything,

even to bring up children. The way children are brought up probably is not right, and no theory or method of bringing them up is, of course, or could be more than relatively right. But in getting as near the right as we humanly may there is no wisdom in despising the advice of the spectator. The man digging a hole in the ground may be less competent than a man not in the hole to perceive that presently the earth is going to cave in. As a matter of fact, old maids, for example, have been known to bring up children very well indeed, for the reason, possibly, that nothing is more detrimental to successful authority over children than relationship to them. All experience shows that the scientific, the abstract management of children is more successful, in the average, than the traditional parental method. This scientific method, I need not say, is not less kindly than the other; it actually is more kindly. Witness the absolute triumph of kindergartens — "

"Now, Professor," I interposed, foreseeing the spectacle of Froebel and Plato moving down arm-in-arm between the Professor's periods, "understand me — "

"A very difficult thing at times," she murmured.

"Understand me — I am speaking now with my eye on the American child."

"And *that*," twinkled the Professor, "requires some dexterity."

"The American child," I pursued, "is accused by many of threatening our destruction, and if the

American view of rearing children is wrong or requires modification, this radical suggestion of Mr. Spencer, looking to greater rather than less liberty in making terms with the instincts of children, becomes a matter for serious concern. If the American idea has stood for anything it is more sugar — that is to say, yielding something to the instinct, the personality of the child. I think we have gone a long way with it. Our children are becoming very self-possessed. Sometimes I have qualms. Take the American girl child — "

"A vast subject," commented the Professor.

"The American girl child is getting a good deal of sugar — figuratively. The question comes, Is it good for her? Is her freedom, her undomestic training, her intellectual development, to the advantage of the race? I believe with Mr. Ruskin that you can't make a girl lovely unless you make her happy. But how can we expect her to know what will make her happy? Aren't you afraid, Professor, that she is becoming a trifle frivolous? Of course you yourself are a living contradiction — "

"Don't try to deceive me," warned the Professor. "I perceive in what you say, not the doubts of an incipient cynic, but the remorse of a doting and indulgent man. Most really typical American men are in the same situation. They are wondering if they haven't overdone it, and, being too busy to find out for themselves, are eager for outside judgment, upon which they may act, *de jure*. The vice

of the American man is his indulgence of the American girl. The foreigner commiseratingly thinks that the American girl demands this indulgence. The American man in his secret soul knows that he has pampered her for his own pleasure, and because, to a busy man, pampering is easier than regulating."

"Yes," I complained, "in the new paradise Adam is always to blame."

"No," protested the Professor, "not always; just humanly often. And don't think that you have invented this modern anxiety for the welfare of girl children. Before and since 'L'Éducation des Filles,' they all have been 'harping on my daughter.' Women have been even more despairing than men. Hannah More thought that 'the education of the present race of females' was 'not very favorable to domestic happiness.' Mrs. Stowe thought 'the race of strong, hearty, graceful girls' was daily decreasing, and that in its stead was coming 'the fragile, easily fatigued, languid girls of the modern age, drilled in book learning and ignorant in common things.' Now that sort of thing has been going on since our race stopped speaking with the arboreal branch of the family. There is perpetual opportunity for a treatise on 'The Antiquity of New Traits.' We are apt to think that we of this era have invented the idea of educating girls, but civilized children always have been educated early in something. Nowadays it is in science. In our colonial days it was in piety. Miss Repplier, who

has a most relishable antipathy for prigs, in fiction and in life, reminds us of Cotton Mather's son, who 'made a most edifying end in praise and prayer at the age of two years and seven months,' and of Phoebe Bartlett, who was 'ostentatiously converted at four.' You are not sorry to be rid of all that, are you?"

"No," I assented, "most assuredly I am not. It is pretty hard to find the Juvenile Prig on this soil nowadays outside of the most inhuman 'books for the young.' And we all are glad of it. You may remember the passage in the Chesterfield letters in which the father writes to the son: 'To-morrow, if I am not mistaken, you will attain your ninth year; so that for the future I shall treat you as a *youth*. You must now commence a different course of life, a different course of studies. No more levity; childish toys and playthings must be thrown aside, and your mind directed to serious objects. What was not unbecoming of a child would be disgraceful of a youth.' We certainly have outgrown that view of things, and the American youngster comes nearer being without hypocrisy than any product of civilization that I ever have studied. But what have we in place of the piety and affectation? What is the working result of so much independence? Are not the American girl children, as well as the boys, a trifle irreverent?"

"Yes, I know," admitted the Professor, "the American child often seems a shade too unawed. Balzac says somewhere that modesty is a relative

virtue — there is 'that of twenty years, that of thirty years, and that of forty years.' Our ancestors believed in a severe, hypocritical modesty for the young, trusting that they would get over it. They did worse than that when they asked youth to anticipate the hypocrisies of age. The same elegant person whom you have just quoted once wrote to that same son: 'Having mentioned laughing, I want most particularly to warn you against it; and I could heartily wish that you may often be seen to smile, but never heard to laugh while you live.' Although Chesterfield insisted that he was 'neither of a melancholy or cynical disposition,' he was proud to be able to say to his boy 'Since I have had the full use of my reason, nobody has ever heard me laugh.' The next time you feel inclined to say mean things about the Puritans remember that declaration by the Earl. Now, the American seems to me not only to look at children differently, but to look at life differently, and any

new traits in the American child probably represent one fact as much as the other. The American idea — I say idea, but I mean the American habit; we explain our habits and call the explanation a theory — merely obliterates age discriminations. The American child is simply the diminutive American. The American girl is her mother writ small. I don't think that she is a whit more independent or irreverent than her mother."

"You don't mean to say, Professor, that a child should not, for instance, be taught to keep a proper silence in company."

"Not an absolute silence. A child either has a right to be in a company or it has not. If it is in the company it has a right to be articulate like the other members of the company. If it is a sensible child it will listen to its elders, not because they are its elders but because they are its betters, because they know more, are more competent to speak. If it is not sensible it will be made to suffer for its foolishness, just as older members of the company are

made to suffer. From my observation, children naturally brought up take their reasonable place very naturally in company."

"My fear is, Professor, that your naturalistic method overlooks much of what we have become accustomed to think when we speak of 'breeding.' Now, children, even American children, do not acquire this instinctively. Breeding includes restraint, externally applied restraint — I don't mean applied with a slipper or a rattan, though restraint to have a really fine catholicity should, in my opinion, include these symbols — but restraint inculcated by a wise, or at least a wiser, authority. I believe sincerely that we have, in the past, tried to bend the twig too far. But the beneficial results of guiding twigs has been, I think, indisputably proved. Taking away too many guides and supports must have its dangers. I think of these things when I see the unhampered American girl of to-day. She is a lovely spectacle. Yet I sometimes wonder, in a trite and old-fashioned way, if her sort of training or absence of training is going to make her a woman who will know how to manage a household and children. I can see clearly enough that she is going to know how to manage a husband; but the house — and the children — "

The Professor was musing. "Your anxiety makes me think of the early criticisms of the kindergarten. 'What!' they used to exclaim, 'a mob of unmanageable brats and no ferule?' Yet it is so. Your

misgivings overlook, I think, the latitudes of training, the obligations of breeding. The American seems to me to be guiding his children as he guides his civic affairs, not by brute force but by giving and taking. If his child is born with the right to the pursuit of happiness, he believes in starting the pursuit early. I suppose that children in the United States have greater liberty than children in any other country. The conferring of liberty has its dangers, and those who confer it cannot expect to escape the obligations that go with the gift. It has cost the American some annoyance to confer liberty and privileges on grown-up folks from various quarters. If he decides — and he does so quite reasonably I think — to include his children, he is bound to stand with the emancipated."

"Professor," I said, "your words are soothing. They are alluringly optimistic. I don't want to reform the American child. I like him — and especially her — as at present conditioned. I believe that the irreverence is largely a seeming irreverence — an irreverence toward traditions rather than toward people and principles; which simply is saying what we should say of grown-up Americans. And I believe that in any case the boy will knock his way out somehow. But the girl — I am not doubting her; I am not believing that she is so petted a darling as Paul Bourget, for instance, seems to think she is. I am not questioning the intrinsic charm of her style, the piquing prophecies of her

mind, the perfection of her beauty, the delight of her companionship; I am wondering whether this immediately agreeable sort of product is going to meet the requirements of life as it is opening up to us in this land, if — "

"Well," swung in the Professor, "if you were going to have a worry, it is a pity you could n't have had a new one — the new ones keep us busy enough. You are very trite this time. You sound like a reformer — "

"Heaven forbid!" I cried.

" — and a reformer nowadays has a passion for beginning on the children. Please don't. Some of these reforming women remind me of the advertisement in the London paper: 'Bulldog for sale. Will eat anything. Very fond of children.' These reforming women will reform anything — and they are very fond of children."

"It is particularly the American girl," I went on, "who is illustrating the modern yearning to skip intervals, to ignore the ordinary processes of time. She is like Horace Walpole, who found that the deliberation with which trees grow was 'extremely inconvenient to his natural impatience.' It does n't seem to make any difference how rigidly her 'coming out' time is fixed, she is getting to be a woman before her time. Mark me, Professor, she knows too much, she — "

"A strictly masculine anxiety, sir."

" — she knows too much, to the exclusion of some other things she does n't know."

"Now *don't* mention the kitchen," cried the Professor, "I am dreadfully tired of that."

"No, Professor, her general cleverness always seems to me to make the kitchen anxiety needless to a great extent. I mean that in knowing so much and assuming so much the American girl child may be missing some of that sweetness that for her lies in a more old-fashioned girlhood. As a kind of unbent twig she is losing some of the more dependent happiness belonging to her and not grudged to her. Mind you, Professor, if a crime has been committed, I am accessory—"

"I began with that assumption," remarked the Professor.

"—and I am hoping that there has been no crime, that the unbent twig is growing all right on its own account, that our spoiled daughters, weary of privilege, may be longing to serve, that if her modesty is not expressed in meek eyes 'full of wonder,' her lofty glance is not, Hermes-like, given to lying. Whatever the future may have in store, she at least is what she seems to be. Her sentiments may sometimes be irreverent, but they are her own. Perhaps the reason she seems more of an individual than the archetypal girl is, as you have suggested, that we have stripped her of the hypocrisy by which she pretended not to be a unit but only the mute shadow of a unit."

"O, you will come around!" chuckled the Professor.

"'Come around,' Professor? You mean sink back into the Slough of Idolatry. I feel it in my bones that in spite of a gleam of intelligent interrogation as to the wisdom of pampering the American girl, I am going to keep right on—"

"You mean, if you will be honest," blurted the Professor, "that you will keep on letting her alone as you do the boy child. That is all. Own up. The most that you have done is cease the special repression of the girl. For better or for worse the American has done simply that: forget sex in rearing his young."

"Ah, Professor! when we forget sex are we not in danger of a costly transgression? Are we not combating nature?"

"On the contrary, my friend, you are ceasing to combat nature. There is nothing nature is more definitely certain to do than to look out for sex on her own account. Is not all of creation trying to

teach us this lesson? Is not all of creation trying to teach us the folly and the futility of meddling? Let nature alone. She knows her business. Sex duality is universal. No amount of sitting up nights will help you to think out a way of successfully interfering."

I looked at the Professor. She is very much a woman. She suggested a type that had been "let alone." She is not a freak. Both her body and her mind are well dressed, and she is good to look upon. To look upon her sometimes fills me with a certain misgiving. But it is not a misgiving for her.

"And yet," it came to me to say, though not precisely in rebuke, "there is such a thing as human humility."

"Humility?" The Professor looked over at me with affected scorn. "Then illustrate it, please. I cannot see the humility of interference. The American does not repress his daughter. You admit that you like the result. Why wrinkle your brow in contemplation of the future? Why not believe that what seems to be true is true, that the American girl flourishes agreeably in her freedom? Give her the natural privileges bestowed elsewhere throughout creation. Let her

*grow*. She is not like Jupiter, without seasons. And you must take one of her seasons at a time."

"Professor," I said solemnly, "you remember Artemis?"

"Yes," she returned with equal solemnity, "and I remember the daughters of Pandareas."

## III

## A CENTURY'S RUN

WE are a very young nation, yet we have a past. In popular acceptance we have little to live down, which should be a comfort. Just at present there is a tendency to be disrespectful toward the past, to smile at ancestral pretension, to humanize the Fathers of the Republic, to sneer at the straw and bones on the floor of King Arthur's dining hall, to uncover the littleness of the ancient giants, to question the beauty of the ancient heroines. Probably this needed to be done, particularly in defence of the abused Present, which always hitherto has had a hard time of it. "Every age since the golden," says George Eliot, "may be made more or less prosaic by minds that attend only to the vulgar and sordid elements, of which there

are always an abundance, even in Greece and Italy, the favorite realms of the respective optimists." The author of "Romola" was willing not to have lived sooner, and to possess even Athenian life "solely as an inodorous fragment of antiquity."

But even the past, sinfully boastful and complacent as it appears, has rights which we must make some show of respecting, and we need not too effusively applaud the present. Possibly the one good excuse for finding out and confessing the whole truth about the past, is the need to show, at whatever cost, that neither all of our vices nor all of our virtues are entirely new. The passion for discovery is so strong that some one always is ready to prove that the most trite and fundamental of traits are absolutely novel, and the same passion appears in the unction with which the pretension is ridiculed and overthrown. I talked one day with a distinguished American historian, who confessed that the supreme difficulty for the commentator on human character and events was that arising from a tendency to "think disproportionately well of facts which he himself has discovered." Admit this to be a human trait and we have a sufficient explanation of the ardor of the discoverer.

Now, no man can regard as insignificant any fact concerning woman, disproportionate as the importance of the fact may be made to appear in comparison with other facts concerning her, so that we have no greater difficulty in appreciating the noisy announcement of the New Woman than in

appreciating the only less audible contention that there is no such appearance. Happily the foolish discussion is over. Only a few catch-words now remind us of the hopeless debate. Of course, Eve was the only new woman. She alone was incontrovertibly new; and to seek by trick of title to invest with newness any woman who came after her, was a frivolous and degenerate conspiracy. Not, indeed, that newness is intrinsically a defect, though heraldry and afternoon teas may be arranged upon that assumption; but in effect it is belittling, destructive of certain benefits of the doubt, insulting to the woman of the past and skeptical as to the woman of the present.

However, our national past and our national present are so full of superficial and even of fundamental contrasts, that if ever a merciful sentence is to be passed upon one who, peering through the "turbid media" of sociological analysis, mistakes the *Zeitgeist* for a new woman, it is in our own longitudes. Like a child growing up under the eye of an arrogant and pompous parent, we have, nationally, been made to feel from the beginning that we are new, even tentative, that we are unclassified, all but vagrant in the ethnological sense. It is possible that recent events will modify in certain important ways, external contemplation of us as a nation, that, in spite of certain new effects which we may be accused of producing, a consciousness and a recognition of our definite maturity may have some responsive effect in ourselves.

Meanwhile it is pleasantly easy to detect many interesting changes in the situation of the American girl within the span of the century. Whether she merely illustrates the social and political changes which have taken place, or, as we so often have been urged to believe, actually indicates why they have taken place, she presents a spectacle of peculiar interest, a spectacle which has so successfully piqued the analytical spirit of the period that it would be expounding the commonplace to do more than quickly sketch a few of the outlines.

We have seen her bidding good-bye to the schoolma'am at a time when any education was good enough for a girl, — good enough not only because neither the kitchen nor the drawing-room exacted Greek, but because heavier pabulum would utterly ruin her mental digestion; and we have seen her at a later time when no education is too good for her, bidding good-bye to an army of instructors at commencement time, radiant in her cap and gown, the class song ringing pleasantly in her ears, the breath of June in her life, with a crisp diploma to symbolize her triumphs. In fact, we have seen the morality of educating her dismissed as a settled question, and the matter of the quantity and quality left to the perhaps not easy but at least final arbitrament of her individual capacity.

We have seen her yield up to strenuous and inventive man, one by one, various and many offices once regarded as essentially domestic, and even as bounding that debatable domain, her "sphere";

we have seen the spinning wheel go into the garret and come down again years later, pertly polished, with pink ribbons on the distaff and spindle; we have seen the superseded milkmaid gathering bottled cream at the basement door, the superseded seamstress wearing a man-made jacket; and all without audible murmur at the displacement.

We have seen the trained nurse succeed Sairy Gamp, many nostrums disappearing gratefully in the transformation, and have found in the new sisterhood of bedside saints a cheering sign of a finer civilization, a prophecy of the future of medicine. We have seen the amanuensis penning "Paradise Lost" and law briefs and grave history and exhausting letters — the amanuensis celebrated in sentimental fiction and unsentimental commerce, fulfil the promise of her own invaluable service in the modern typewriter, whose little white fingers help move the lever of the great mercantile machine, without whom modern trade could scarcely stir, and

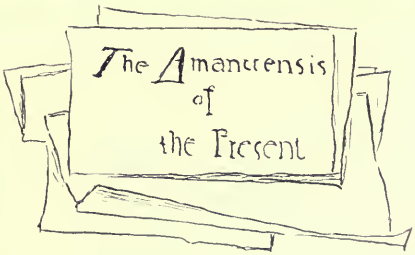
whose taking away would rob all business life of an inestimably sweetening influence.

We have seen her needle placed in the jaws of a machine, and have seen her yoked with men in service to this iron master. We have seen her leave the fireside armchair to climb the tall stool of the counting-room and the railway station. We have seen the bodkin displaced by the scalpel, the lace cap by the mortar-board, the apron by the vestment. We have seen her emerge from the shadows of the sanctuary to speak in the councils of the elders, we have seen her hurry the breakfast dishes to go and vote.

We have seen her, once content to be the theme of art, become a master of every medium, even of architecture, and throwing aside at last, and without petulance, the insulting tributes that come under a sex label. We have seen her, once forbidden to read newspapers, successful in making them; committing errors, but under bad counsel and direction rather than by any failure of her own taste, and winning highest honors in journalistic art and conflict.

The philosophy of all these changes naturally is complex and difficult. It is a truism to remark that the danger always is of assuming that they mean more than they do. We perhaps instinctively measure a change by the mere picturesqueness of the contrast. We require to be reminded much that humanity changes very little from century to century, that whatever the appearances, great revolutions in human sentiment and motive probably

# The Amanuensis of the Past


The Amanuensis
of
the Present

have not happened. No student of human nature comes oftener upon any discovery than upon that of the simple persistence in the twilight of the century of the old human instincts that prevailed at the dawn. So that we need not think to find in all these new clothes any greatly different people. When the century's clock strikes the hundredth year, and Father Time, acting as master of ceremonies, shouts "Masks off!" there, among all the masqueraders, are the same faces that have grown familiar in the every-day of life.

If the reader detects in this attitude any wish to escape the burdens of an explanation, an anxiety to dodge the awful Why? in all these outward modifications of Miss America, he, and especially she, is quite at liberty to do so, for, as I perhaps have indicated, and must repeat defensively from time to time, definitely to explain Miss America is farthest from my thoughts; though I cannot deny an intention, which doubtless appeared at an early stage, to express respectfully certain untested, and, it may be, actually impulsive, personal opinions regarding her. To refrain from exercising such a privilege under circumstances which forbid interruption would be superhuman.

More interesting to me at the moment are some appearances already fairly familiar, yet new in garb and situation. The young woman in new lights and new places has a natural fascination. I realized this vividly one day in the hotel of a Western city, when I became conscious that an

unusual guest had arrived. She was a sturdy young woman, yet delicate of feature, with a mild, undismayed blue eye. She came swinging into the hotel, a darkey lad at her russet shoe heels with a telescope bag. She herself carried a sleek yellow satchel which she placed in front of the desk. She wrote her name in a firm, small hand, took a heap of letters handed to her by the clerk, and dropped into a near-by chair to open several of them with a quick flip of her gloved finger. In no way was she radically dressed. Her tailor-made suit was of a fine cloth, richly trimmed. Her clothes, like her manner, had not an unnecessary touch. Later, I saw her interviewing the porter, who presently was rolling three large sample trunks into one of those first floor rooms provided by certain hotels for the use of drummers, whose goods for display cannot well be taken upstairs. I saw her come in at different times with three different shopkeepers, and others came, evidently by appointment, to inspect many rolls of carpet which soon littered the display room.

"She's a trump!" muttered the clerk, with an admiring glance across the corridor; "the best drummer Warp & Woof ever had. She succeeded one of their New York men, and she beat his orders by forty thousand dollars the first year. And there's no fooling about her either. She doesn't try to mesmerize the customers, though she's pretty enough to do that if she cared to. She simply makes them want the goods, and she sells so square

Thanksgiving Day Old Style

Thanksgiving Day: New Style

that she does n't have any trouble coming back to the same people."

"Is she a single woman?" I asked. Something in this inquiry amused the clerk. Then he said: "Well, they say she 's engaged to a drummer for Felt, Feathers & Co., and that if they ever manage to get into Chicago at the same time they will get married."

One day in mid-Missouri a lean, brown, barefooted boy was driving me across country to a railway station. Suddenly the boy said: "We ain't goin' t' have no dog show."

"No?" The boy shook his head. Presently he added: "And that girl 's dead sore on this town."

"What girl?" I demanded.

The boy turned to me with a look of incredulity. "Did n't you see 'er?"

"You don't mean that girl in the blue dress that was at the hotel breakfast this morning?"

"That 's her, yes."

I remembered that she had very dark eyes, and no color; that she wore an Alpine hat and a neat gown, that she looked straight before her with an almost sullen expression when she spoke to the waiter.

"I drove her over to Bimley's," the boy said, "and she sat there where you are for two miles without saying a word. Then she turned at me quick and says, 'Have you got a cigarette?' and I said yes I had, just one. Then she said, 'Have yer got a match?' and I give her that, and she

smoked for a long time without sayin' anything. After a while she let out and said this was the meanest, low-down town she ever struck, that they was meaner 'n dirt here, especially the college, and that she never wanted t' see it n'r hear of it agin. Yer see, she goes from one town to another and gits up dog shows for the people that have fine dogs, and they have the town band, an' lemonade an' cake an' prizes. Anyway, she had a hard time stirrin' them up here; but she could have got through all right only for the president of the college. He said he would n't let the girls go, and that settled it. They gave it up after this girl 'd blown in a two days' bill at the hotel, and she got mad and lit out. Well, she quieted down agin before we got to Bimley's, and when we was in the hollow by Moresville I looked at her and she was cryin'."

One other glimpse: Miss Linnett was the typewriter at Stoke Brothers'. At first she had been just the typewriter, coming highly recommended from the typewriter school. She appeared at the minute of nine and went away at the minute of five, unless one of the Stokes stayed beyond that hour, or late letters and the copying book delayed her. She unvaryingly dressed in black, wore her brown hair simply in a knot, and in the depth of winter always had a flower of some sort on her table. The elder Stoke was feeble, and his eyesight grew to be so poor that she read his letters to him. The junior Stoke would never let her take formal dictation,

preferring to give her the gist of what he wanted to say and letting her put it in her own way. In this habit they both came greatly to depend upon her. After a time, too, her growing knowledge of the business induced the cashier and bookkeeper to go to her in certain contingencies, and she acquired, without either seeking or rejecting it, various discretionary powers in regard to the machinery of the business. If anything went wrong they resorted to Miss Linnett. If old Stoke forgot anything Miss Linnett was a second memory to him. If the younger Stoke was in a hurry he would hand over the letters to Miss Linnett to answer as she saw fit. She knew all the correspondents of the house and their prejudices. She knew the combination of old Stoke's private safe after Stoke himself had forgotten it. She had a way of her own in putting away documents, and nobody ever thought of studying the scheme. She met all of these obligations with a dispassionate serenity, and everything she did was done with an easy and amiable quickness. She became the brain centre of the office. She was Stoke Brothers.

Then one night she broke down, fainted, there before old Stoke, who fell on his knees beside her and wept in real anguish while the little white bookkeeper ran for a doctor, and the cashier tremblingly fetched water to sprinkle her face. When she did not come the next day at nine the situation in the office was pitiful. Old Stoke was useless, and the younger Stoke shifted his letters from one hand to

the other in utter misery. The bookkeeper and cashier fumbled through their work dazed and unstrung. In the days of doubt that followed the situation grew more gloomy. There was great excitement when one morning she came down town in a cab, white and fluttering, and, leaning on the bookkeeper's arm, made her way from the elevator to the office. She smiled at the little group, accepted the homage quietly, insisted on showing them where certain papers were, promised them that she should be back very soon, and went away again, old Stoke patting her hand and telling her to be careful. At the end of the month she died.

"What did they ever do without her?" I asked when I had heard the story.

"They did n't do without her. Stoke Brothers went out of business. I suppose they had been thinking of doing that; they were pretty well on in years — and they could n't get on without Miss Linnett."

Yes, of all the changes that have marked this changeful century, of all the transformations, social, political and economic, that have affected the situation of women since the establishment of the Republic, that change is most significant and potent which has placed her so widely and so potently in business. Miss America is in business: patiently ambitiously, grotesquely, indispensably in business. The social changes have not been great, — indeed, one is often startled to find how slight they have been.

Political changes, important and prophetic as they are, have not as yet sensibly affected the life of women in general; while the extraordinary extent of women's entrance into business in co-operation with and competition with men, has had an unexampled effect upon the American girl's domestic, social and political situation.

The American girl is not, as yet, very definitely conscious of this effect, although she has been told about it often and vehemently in one way or another. Unless she is writing a paper for her club she has n't time to think much about it. She enjoys business as distinguished from plain work. The idea of a business training rather piques the fancy of an era that has laughed away the tradition of a "sphere," and the sort of young lady who in a past era would have no obligations beyond needlework, is found dabbling in shorthand and bookkeeping, as the princes learn a trade.

And so the scientific observer is greatly distressed at times by the thought that there must be a mighty readjustment before things can come out smooth again. You might think that the

whole thing had come upon science unawares, that it was, in the phrase of a young woman who was not new, all "too rash, too unadvised, too sudden." But no sound authority exhibits real worriment on this point. If it is man who complains, it is man who refuses to get along without

The Editor's
Busy Day

her. From this time forth business is going to be a co-educational affair. We shall be told many times again that somehow all this will detract from woman's charm, and whether we believe or mistrust so much, we shall, I suspect, go on taking the interesting risk.

By the natural processes of time, women, young and old, will, I suppose, like the rest of creation, continue to become better off. Doubtless this is optimism. Pessimism says that two and two make three. Sentimentalism says that two and two make five. It is optimism that is content, and with good reason, to say that two and two make four.

The traveller in a scurrying railroad train becomes familiar with few more thought-suggesting sights than the farm woman in the cottage door. She comes forward with her hands in her apron, if not with a baby on her arm. Sometimes she waves her hand to the unanswering train. Sometimes she leans against the door-post and looks, one might fancy wistfully, at the clattering cars, at the people who are going somewhere. Sometimes the doorway is in a cabin with one room. Sometimes the woman is slatternly, drooping; sometimes she has the glow of content. The spectator in the car cannot but wonder what are the emotions of the spectator in the doorway. Doubtless there is both envy and commiseration on each side. If the spectator in the cars sometimes pities the woman in the cabin door as one who is left out and left behind, the spectator in the cabin door

sometimes pities the haste-hunted spectator who is being noisily flung about in the great loom of life.

To glance backward over a century is to feel that life constantly reiterates this situation. We all of us are roughly divided — very roughly, sometimes — into the two groups: the people in the cars and the people in the doorways. The look of things must go on being affected by the point of view. There is a view-point aloof from either situation, but it is not one which the merely human sojourner ever can be privileged to occupy.

## IV

## STITCHES AND LINKS

"DID it ever occur to you," demanded the Professor, "how few people actually do fashionable things?—that we probably are just as hyperbolical in assuming that young women once amused themselves with embroidery as that they now amuse themselves with golf?"

"Stitches and links," I pondered, knowing that the Professor did not expect an answer.

"What proportion of folks should you say actually do concentrate their functions in the 'barbaric swat'?"

I lifted my head; and she went on:

"Yes, I know that there always must be a fashionable, a dominating pastime, and I have no disparagement of golf as golf. It is a good enough game in its way. I am bound to admit this after having made a very good score myself. Moreover,

it is Scottish, which is a guarantee of a latent profundity. It is a large game, and, as Sir Walter said of eating tarts, is 'no inelegant pleasure.' I have been told by those who have had an opportunity to know, that it calls out a great variety of qualities. That may be said of many other things; but no matter. My suggestion is that the assumption of prevalence in a so-called fashionable thing leaves something unexplained, something that may be very important, a philosophical hiatus — "

"Professor," I said, "have you never stopped to think that fashionable fads and fads that are not fashionable are potent in two ways, that is to say, first and primarily, in participation, and second, in contemplation? There is less golf than talk about golf. One game of golf may be repeated any day, for example, one hundred million times in print. As the newspapers play golf with type, so the physically present spectators on the links are repeated many-fold in those who not less are participants and spectators, who wear ostentatious golf stockings without ever having seen a teeing ground. This secondary participation and appreciation is the breath of life to social fads. Probably this may be said of all not absolutely primary pleasures. And so society says, 'We are all playing golf,' which is not true at all, but which instantly produces a situation that amounts to the same thing. We shall say that one woman in ten thousand who may be in a situation, so far as opportunity is concerned, to play anything, is playing golf, but this shall not

make it possible for the other nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine who are not playing golf, to play anything else and make it fashionable at the same time. This could not be, any more than that we could have more than one Napoleon, more than one most-talked-of book, more than one absorbing scandal, at a time. All epidemics present this feature of concentration. Napoleon was just as much an epidemic as crinoline or 'Robert Elsmere.' The hypnotists have a word for this which has escaped me at the moment — "

"Multo-suggestion," contributed the Professor, patiently.

"Something to that effect, in which we have a scientific explanation of the exclusiveness of fashion, an explanation of fashion itself. And the thing could not be different. That susceptibility to the contagion of enthusiasm which inspires the American with so passionate an interest in all of his hobbies, is a susceptibility which explains his

keener interest in life, his democracy of sentiment, his ardent yet generally cautious and sane pursuit of entertainment."

"Much of this," interposed the Professor, in her ruthless way, "might, it seems to me, be said with equal propriety of any civilized people."

"I think, Professor, that there are some significant points of difference — points of difference associated very largely, I think, with the American sense of humor, which we are in the habit of complacently arrogating. I think, Professor, that your philosophical hiatus is occupied very largely by a sense of humor."

"That," laughed the Professor, "reminds me of that story of the boy who was seeking to explain to his companion the characteristics of spaghetti. 'You know maccaroni?' 'Yes.' 'And you know the hole through it?' 'Yes.' 'Well, spaghetti 's the hole.' I do wish I could believe more completely in your sense of humor theory. In the first place it is hard to explain some of the things the young people do by their possession of a sense of humor."

"On the contrary, Professor, I think American young folks develop a sense of humor earlier than any other in the world, which is a Yankee enough thing to say. This may be an odd contention from me, but to me one of the most distinctive traits of the American girl is her gift for being unserious. It is not always a sense of humor, either; if it is, it is a sense entirely her own, for it

certainly is not associated with traits which we ascribe to a sense of humor in men. In any case it is a saving sense, a sense that keeps her from taking things so tragically as the unknowing or unsympathetic spectator might expect. The American has a genius for radicalism, a creative defiance of logic and tradition. Once in a while some philosopher discovers that the frivolities of life have an immense importance. Scientifically the physical distortions of a laugh are ridiculous. Yet we almost have ceased to defend it, even in young ladies."

"A ready laugh," the Professor said, "is no indication of a sense of humor. The comic and the humorous are sometimes even antagonistic. You have heard me defend irreverence in girls, but a want of seriousness often indicates a want of humor, for a sense of humor, my friend, is essentially a sense of proportion. Now, to my mind, the American girl does not indicate so keen a sense of proportion in her golf, for instance, as in her clubs."

"Well," I ventured, "she is serious enough in them, surely."

"Only to those who do not understand her," returned the Professor severely. "That women take their clubs too seriously, too improvingly, has been a matter of complaint for a long time. There has been almost a missionary spirit among those who have sought to save our girls from clubs. Some of the missionaries have preached total abstinence among the girls. 'If you take one club,'

they have said, ' you will take another. The appetite will grow on you. You pride yourself on your power of resistance now; but after you have taken a club, a dreadful, unappeasable craving will spring up within you, and you will want more. You will not be able to pass a club without wanting it. Even after you have yielded to a morning, afternoon, and evening indulgence, you will find a temptation to take a luncheon club too, — and when you take them with your meals they have a particularly insidious effect. From this it is but a step to a Browning bracer at nine A. M. and a Schopenhauer cocktail just before dinner. Take no clubs at all — especially the subtle, supposed-to-be-innocuous reading club — ' "

" Look not upon the club when it is read," I murmured.

" ' — for these,' " the Professor continued, with her inimitable chuckle, " ' for these lead surely to more deadly stimulants. Indeed, these are, to those who truly know them, more deadly than many another sort.' Then there is the more moderate school of missionaries which is for limiting the number of clubs to so many a week, or to cutting them down gradually on the theory that a girl who has been taking clubs right along cannot stop short without peril to her health. By dropping, say, one club a week for a whole season, a girl may, from a repulsive intellectual sot be brought back, by patient nursing, and in due time, to decency and three clubs a week."

"But, Professor," I said, "they must believe in clubs as a medicine, as a stimulant in the case of a threatening mental chill — "

"Don't be frivolous," commanded the Professor; "my irony was incidental to the statement that all of this talk about the seriousness of women's clubs is based on a misapprehension. In outward form the clubs are serious, and the theme, their ostensible *raison d'être*, almost justifies the misapprehension. When you see a batch of women setting in upon civil government, or mediæval pottery, or Sanskrit, or Homer's hymn to the Dioscuri, or the Heft-khan of Isfendiyar, it is, perhaps, instinctive that the uninformed should jump to the conclusion that these women are serious, though a moment's thought might suggest a wiser view. If women really took these things seriously they would not survive. The truth is that the French Revolution, and the Rig-Veda, and the Ramayana are all very amusing if you know how to go at them. If the physical culture classes took the exercises as seriously as the teachers I am sure the members would all break down. And it is

the same way with the study of cathedrals or street-cleaning."

I reminded the Professor of the lady I had heard of, who wanted to know at the club whether the Parliamentary drill then organizing was anything like the Delsarte movements, and of the other, who, at her first meeting, being appointed a teller, wanted to know what she was to tell. "I trust, Professor, that you will not take from me my simple, unquestioning faith in the earnestness of these light-seeking ladies."

"Those instances," smiled the Professor, "illustrate the first phase. You must not be misled by them, for they actually are confirmatory. You may discern in them the attitude of mind favorable to the feminine way of taking things lightly. A woman who asks why, never gets nervous prostration. It is when she gets above asking why that you may watch for shipwreck."

"Well, Professor, all I can say is that you have left me in a state of miserable darkness as to women's clubs. Surely there are vast misapprehensions somewhere."

"There surely are," admitted the Professor.

"But how do you explain them?"

"The women?"

"The clubs."

"By woman's revolt against her segregation. Not, in my opinion, that she is protesting against the gregarious advantages of man, but because she is beginning to discover that her sisters are worth

knowing. She has begun to be impersonally interested in, as well as interesting to, the other woman. The woman's desire is not improvement; it is, whether she knows it or not, the other woman, precisely as a man's interest in his club is the other man. It has been said that a man often goes to his club to be alone, and that there is this advantage in a club that is a place, over a club that is a state of mind. But a woman goes to a club *not* to be alone. I suppose there are times when it would do a woman good to get away from her family, not into company, but into lonesome quiet. Mrs. Moody, who has said so many wise things, declares in her 'Unquiet Sex' that college girls are too little alone for the health of their nerves. This may be so, yet women's clubs are contemporaneous with girls' colleges. It begins to look as if it was at college that the American girl learned that it is not good for woman to be alone — even with her family. At any rate, that independence which is so characteristic of the American girl, which is, as I have been informed and believe, somewhat disconcerting to men, is, undoubtedly, largely the result of the American girl's improved relations with her sister women. When she is as successfully gregarious with regard to women as men are with regard to men, her sex maturity will be complete. I know that you are wondering what sort of a woman she is going to be in that matured state. Have no anxiety. She will not be less agreeable, but more so. She will overdo the clubs, but she will recover

from that; she will shed them the moment they cease to serve her purpose. I am going to a club now. I am going to talk to it about Savonarola. The club will be very well dressed, and so shall I, if I know myself, and we neither of us shall let smoke from the fateful fires of the fifteenth century blind us to the fact that we are living in the nineteenth."

"All of which," I said, in a severe tone, "is illustrative of the fact that woman is a sophist — though perhaps I should say an artist, for she uses life as so much material with which to construct an effect."

"Life *is* an art," remarked the Professor at the mirror.

"And you, Professor — "

But she was gone. I understood well enough that the Professor had just given an exhibition of her dexterity in taking the other side, taking it in a feminine rather than in a pugnacious spirit. The Professor's negatives always remind me of how

affirmative the American girl is. There is an English painting called "Summer," in which the artist (Mr. Stephens) gracefully symbolizes the drowsy indolence of June. This classic allegory may not have the English girl specifically in mind, but I am quite certain that we should not be satisfied with an American symbol for the same idea which did not in some way indicate that Miss America, even in summer, is likely to be representing some

enthusiasm, Pickwickian or not as you may choose to make it out. The spirit of fantasy, sitting in the midst of our variegated life, who should call up the American Summer Girl, must summon a different company. The spirit of fantasy would know that the American summer girl, though she can be a sophist, and agree that this or that is the fashion this summer, is nevertheless not to be painted as a reiteration. It frequently was remarked of the Americans at Santiago that they had great individ-

ual force as fighters. There always will be critics to remark upon the hazard of this trait in war. At all events it was and is an American trait. And in conducting her summer campaign against an elusive if not altogether a smokeless enemy, Miss America is displaying the same trait. She can accept a social sophistry, but you must leave her individuality. She will not have tennis wholly put aside if she does not choose. She will not give up her horse because a little steed of steel has entered the lists, nor give up her bicycle because it has become profanely popular. She may choose to arm herself solely with a parasol, to detach herself from even the suggestion of a hobby, which, to one who has the individual skill, is a notoriously potent way in which to establish one of those absolute despotisms so familiar and so fatal in society. There is the girl with a butterfly net, the girl who goes a-fishing, the girl who swims, the girl who wears bathing suits, the girl who gives a sparkle to the Chautauqua meetings in the summer, the girl who gets up camping parties, the girl who gets up the dances, the girl who plots theatricals, the girl with the camera, the girl who can shoot like a cowboy, — where should we end that remarkable list? How impossible to express the summer girl in any single type?

Indeed, the American girl's methods of amusing herself are so various as to make it increasingly difficult to typify her at all, except as a goddess who, like Minerva (though *she* did not go in much

for amusing herself), shall illustrate a wide range of activities serenely and successfully undertaken. There is a triteness in the accomplishments of any period, yet the spirit of individualism in the American girl introduces here, as elsewhere, a diversifying element. I was reading the other day that Miss Mitford had that "faculty for reciting verses which is among the most graceful of accomplishments." Where have all the verse reciters gone? Why did this elegant accomplishment perish? Are we all less poetical? Are our girls losing that sense of sentiment to which we used to look for so many of their quieter charms? Has this change anything to do with another change, surely not to be lightly accepted, which has of late years taken poetry from the top of the page, where we once thought it belonged of natural right, and placed it at the bottom? Is it finally to be crowded off the page altogether? Has the fact that women no longer consider verse an accomplishment anything to do with this subtle but revolutionary change? And what shall poetry say? Will poetry go on as it has from the beginning of time arming us with epithets of praise?

> If she be not so to me,
> What care I how fair she be?

I must ask the Professor some day what she thinks of the disappearance of poetry — she would tell me to say verse — as an accomplishment. For of course we cannot afford to ignore the significance of accomplishments, their influence either upon

those who display or upon those who observe them. Accomplishments are more than an armor, a decoration, — they are a vent. A boy has his fling ; a girl must have her accomplishments. It is long since hobbies were fitted with a side-saddle, and we have had no occasion to resent the general results. The concrete effect upon individual men is sometimes disquieting, but that is another matter. Miss America is, after all, especially accomplished in what she knows. The product of a system by which the limits of her information are the limits of her curiosity, — for, in general, she is not prohibited from reading the newspapers, — she has acquired a faculty which may, for aught I know, have superseded her quotation of verse, — the faculty for quoting facts. Yes, she still quotes, and the newer accomplishment, if less elegant, is not one which we may scorn or overlook. If in Tennyson's phrase, she is part of all that she has seen, we might add "in print," as a supplemental explanation of her attitude of mind.

Perhaps if the author of "Les Misérables" saw her at certain times he might use the qualified praise he applied to the Parisians when he called them "frivolous but intelligent." Yet if St. Jerome had seen her on the beach I hardly think he could have had the heart to say, "I entirely forbid a young lady to bathe." Her whole effect is qualifying. She carries into all her enthusiasms a modifying reservation. The trait is typified and illustrated for us when we

see her coming home from the reading club on a wheel, or carrying her novel to breakfast. The social hysteric always is sure that something dreadful is going to happen, and then, in one of those sensational hairbreadth escapes in which nature delights, the thing does not happen. The hysteric has overlooked the reservation by which the fad escapes monomania, by which the enthusiasm is subordinated to its owner.

Intermittently her enthusiasms bring up the venerable charge of mannishness. A hundred years ago the editor of the London "Times" complained savagely that women were becoming wickedly masculine. "Their hunting, shooting, driving, cricketing, fencing, faroing and skating," he cried,

" present a monstrous chaos of absurdity not only making day and night hideous but the sex itself equivocal. Lady-men or men-ladies, 'you'll say it's Persian, but let it be changed.'" Ptahhotpou the ancient Egyptian has something to the same effect, but I have forgotten his phrase.

## V

## "WHAT IS GOING ON IN SOCIETY"

ONE day it happened with me, as with many another impatient traveler, that I had to spend two hours between trains in a certain obscure town. Perhaps I should say, in a certain obscure railway station, for the town was singularly vague, uninviting and irresponsive, not at all the sort of place that one would expect to know what to do with. It was, indeed, the fragment of a town, as if, in the sprinkling of villages along the railway, the material at this point ran short, leaving barely a sufficient supply of elemental features. And being confronted by the unprofitableness of the prospect,

— by the drowsy, straggling street, running (the word sounds ironical) from the station, the unfriendly stare of the town hall, plastered over with play bills; the sunburned whiteness of the little church; the obvious taciturnity of the man smoking in front of the general merchandise store, — I bought the local paper, for there was a local paper, with a "patent outside," that occurred every Friday morning. And the first thing that struck my eye in the local paper was a conspicuous headline: "What is Going on in Society."

I had seen the thing before in other papers, in Chicago, in Boston, in Washington, in Atlanta, and in the provincial habit that falls to a man who thinks of life from the view-point of a big city, I had associated the line with something very different from any conditions that seemed likely to be present here. I looked out of the station window at the little white church, at the chromatic town hall, at the general merchandise store, at a neat girl with a tan cape who was coming down the main street, — and turned with curiosity to the society column.

It was just the same as any other. It had all the adjectives of New York, or Richmond, or St. Louis, and if Voltaire had been reading it he might have hesitated to say that the adjective is the enemy of the noun. Evidently, too, the same things were going on that were going on elsewhere in society. It appeared especially that Miss Effie So-and-So had just "come out," and that the event was signalized on Monday evening by a dance which was de-

scribed at length as to the spacious drawing-rooms, the floral devices, the orchestra behind the fringe of palms, the cotillion, the favors, the elegant gown of Miss So-and-So's mother, the gowns and ornaments of the other feminine guests, in detail, with a cordial closing word for the refreshments, which had been served at eleven o'clock. On Tuesday night there had been a birthday dance at the Sheriff's, at which "society was largely represented"; at a pink tea on Wednesday afternoon there had been some novel decorations at small tables; and on Thursday evening the young ladies of the Polaris Club had gone over to Sudley's with Mrs. So-and-So as chaperon. There was more as to a festival in preparation by the ladies of the First Church, as to a euchre party for the following Thursday, and as to a little surprise which it was whispered that "some society men" were arranging for the close of the season.

Here, certainly, was food for thought. Could anything more piquantly have illustrated the relativity of the term Society, more brilliantly have demolished the pretension that Society has any geography? We have our book definitions, by which we agree glibly to say that society is the cultured, the fashionable, the favored class (or elsewise, according to your dictionary) of "any community"; but how easy it is for city pretence (and provincialism is never so arrogant as in big cities) to see in its own set the true title to social eminence. It is indicative of that interesting individualism which

prevails in the United States, and which perhaps we may learn to prize as one of the precious products of democracy, that no town regards itself as small in any sense that shall restrict or disqualify its individuals. This is particularly true of towns in their feminine population. You may find a community without gas, electric light, telephones or a board of trade, but you shall not on that account decide that it is too small to have a woman's club and a social calendar. We are accustomed to say that it all is a question of degree.

When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman?

We are accustomed to admit that in the senate of society even the small states shall say their say. But scarcely can we realize without much travel how far the fact that this country is too big for the focussing of society in any one, two, or dozen places, affects the demeanor and development of the social units. The fact that there are widely prevalent formulæ, helps us first to the assumption, safe enough, that these are applied,

that there is a wish and an occasion to use them in some way. They help us further to an estimate of the relative activity of social forces, to the points of emphasis. But there is one thing the wide use of formulæ never will help you to find out, and that is the most interesting fact of all — the local flavor of the conformity. Society is an Established Church in whose pews the dissenters form a majority; and if I could, by some chance, have let my train go by and have been admitted into the circle of that village society, I certainly should have found that while it gave a sort of lip-service to the social creeds, this society had its own way of doing so, and that it adopted lightheartedly, like its new byword or improved flounce, certain phrases, certain dicta of the world's larger social groups, for its own purposes, with its own reservations. I do not deny that I have seen social formulæ grimly and mechanically used in certain quarters, but the whimsical reservation is more characteristic.

The American girl is so definitely a social creature, and her social attributes are so personal, that she never appears to be dependent upon social machinery. She brings into society the invaluable force of her individual availability. That our social groups seem to cohere proves that she must possess in some degree that deference to form which begins in the acceptance of terms. Humanity can never pair well until it has grouped well. Grouping is the beginning of that compromise which reaches its crisis in pairing. Even the goddess of democracy, who is presumed to dote upon calling a spade a spade, who hates the euphemisms of effete monarchical society, may not despise the butler's baritone or the futility of attempting on one occasion six hundred different forms of adieu. Even George Eliot admitted that "a little unpremeditated insincerity must be indulged in under the stress of social intercourse." The trouble with unpremeditated insincerities, however, is that you often wish you had n't said them, not (unfortunately for the symmetry of the retribution) because they were insincere, but because they were unpremeditated and inferior. It is much safer to be unpremeditated with sincerities than with insincerities, and, as the literature of social satire may help us to see, there is great hazard in any case. It is a pity, perhaps, that the great advantages of meeting your kind in your and their best clothes, must be bought so dearly, yet, as Thackeray has observed, "if we may not speak of the lady who

has just left the room, what is to become of conversation and society?"

Social custom is so arbitrary that it might be, and doubtless would be, a reckless and inconclusive thing for any one to assume that the American girl in society is actually so radical as her reputation in other avenues might suggest. I believe that it is quite commonly agreed that while the French girl in society is, perforce, much more reserved than the American, the English girl at a ball or an "evening" exhibits a freedom from restraint not commonly seen in America. These things, however, count for little except as showing the domination of mere form, for there can be no doubt that in social life, using the term broadly, the American girl has more liberty, and uses more liberty than the English girl. If the privileges of a host's roof are liberally construed by the English girl, the American girl takes a candid and undaunted view of a hotel and a public ballroom; and under conditions which in any manner detach her from the immediate presence of formality, she falls back upon her individual preferences, her personally developed methods of meeting situations, with a readiness and sureness that carry their own vindication. Because she can have a developed individuality yet be no rebel, the American girl can grasp and enjoy liberty without despising authority. Indeed, her very possession of liberty must develop a certain personal conservatism which as a mere subject of authority she might never acquire. A great many fantastic things

which at various times have been said about the American girl might appear to have been uttered in ignorance of the fact that there is an American mother.

I have in mind a family living in Washington city, where there is, as everyone knows, a highly seasoned and heterogeneous society, a society utterly different from any that is to be met with elsewhere in this country, and one which on that account offers peculiarly excellent opportunities for study on the part of those foreign observers who enjoy being misled about us. If there is any place in the United States where the American mother has opportunity for her administrative genius, it is at the national capital. The peculiar conditions created by political, diplomatic and administrative forces in the capital of a republic, the prevalence of the open door, and the presence of both domestic and foreign transients who do not always appreciate the limitations of liberal custom, make Washington a place apart. A single instance may serve to illustrate the firmness of the women who actually control social destiny. Under circumstances which it is not necessary to detail, a certain elegant attaché of one of the legations began calling upon the young lady of the family I have named. He was a handsome and entertaining young man, easy with women and cordial with men, glib in the arts, himself a good singer, and speaking English with a fascinating inflection. One evening the mother said quietly to the daughter: "Grace, the next time

the Count calls I wish that you would ask to be excused." The daughter looked her astonishment. She was not greatly interested in the count, yet he was very agreeable, and she said so. But her mother said, "Grace, you must trust me." And when the count came again he was made to understand.

It was a simple, unsensational incident, but because I knew the liberal ethics of the mother and the apparently complete independence of the daughter (she was twenty-three) the incident the more effectively reminded me that though the American mother does not feel it incumbent upon her to closely hover over her offspring with a solicitous wing, she not the less observes and governs. It so happened that the gilded count a few months later became involved in so gross a scandal that his withdrawal from Washington became imperative. Influence in his government saved him from worse annoyance than transfer to another court. The mother's instinct had been true. And who can doubt that a liberally reared girl, when she herself assumes the office of mother, will, without having to make sinister payment for her knowledge, be the better equipped for a judgment of the world in the interest of those who may be dependent upon her authority?

That the American mother cares more for real than for apparent authority, explains, to those who know, the visible and so often misleading detachment of the daughter; and the daughter's sense of a dependence that is not irksome, a suzerainty that

is not intrusive, a mother care that has no vanity of assertion, appears in her freer bearing, her finer self-reliance. Whatever her special gifts, meeting her socially always is likely to have the charm associated with the fact that she never is afraid either that she will not rise to the occasion or that she will offend authority. She has not the first fear because she is playing her own game. She has not the second because she does not live in a threatening or too admonitory shadow.

You think of these things sometimes when you sit opposite a fan. Her fan! Have you not seen it blot out at the critical moment all that was worth looking at in the world? Have you not realized that it is part of her panoply? Have you not witnessed over and over again the genius which she exhibits in the management of accessories? Have you not heard in the flutter of her fan a note from that orchestra of sounds in which she makes even her silk petticoat play a witching part?

With her fan you quite naturally associate those two absolutely unanswerable arguments — an American girl's eyes. They are different, believe me, these American eyes, from any other sort. The women of no other country can look at you that way. You must admit, and in some degree understand this, or you cannot hope to understand Miss America in society or anywhere else. You may say of her eyes what Darwin hinted of eyes in general, that they are the supreme physical paradox. They do not peer like the virgin eyes of

poetical tradition. It has been complained that they have not at all the inquiring look once thought to be so winsome in the young. They seem to *know*, yet they are too feminine to assert. We say hard things about the poets nowadays, but who can blame the poets for becoming emotional over her eyes? Are eyes ever more a mystery, a contradiction, an uncombattable force than when Miss America turns upon us her gentle yet fearless, her wise yet maidenly orbs? We may have planned a battle. We may have girded ourselves for a glance toward these twin guns in that implacable turret, but at the first encounter our bravado withers. When she uses these weapons as she pre-eminently knows how, we declare the motion carried — the eyes have it.

So soon as we grasp the fact that Miss America can look *and* talk, we are in a fair way to understand some of the secrets of her power. It is quite generally admitted that she talks well, and very seldom, I think, with any disparaging reservation. She is a good talker. She is more; she is a good conversationalist, for she can listen. If speech is silver and silence is golden, I am free to admit that Miss America does not seem to believe altogether in the gold standard. She appears to be somewhat of a bi-metallist. I don't blame her; and I always admire her method of dealing with men who believe in the free silver of continuous talk.

Her reserve here is characteristic of her agreeable poise in society whenever and wherever she is called

upon to say the right thing at the right time. She never exhibits stage fright, though she has confessed (afterward) to the symptoms. If, like Isabella, she is "loth to speak so indirectly," she does n't show it. She may, indeed, like the Venus of Melos, be disarmed, but she never will be found, like the Winged Victory, to have lost her head. Foreigners sometimes have said that Miss America talks too loudly, but I am sure that this effect arises from her vivacity, and one might retort that if her enunciation ever is more than necessarily audible the chances are all in favor of your being glad that you did not miss a word.

Sometimes she has a way of talking to you at an oblique angle. She likes to banter while she pours tea, for example, parrying and thrusting with the agility of one of those Viennese girls who know how to fence with a blade in each hand. When Mme. De Staël declared that conversation, "like talent, exists only in France," Miss America had not grown up. It still is true, probably, as Mrs. Poyser pointed out, that a woman "can count a stocking top while a man's

gitting his tongue ready." Man's development has been distressingly slow. He never has met but indifferently the supreme test of the *tête-à-tête*. It may be that his habits of life dispose him to take an exaggerated, sometimes even a morbid, view of the hazard of words. Regarding the situation solemnly is fatal to facility. The situation is not, and cannot be, intrinsically sol-

emn, being devised to get away from solemnity. The talk is no more momentous than the tea. Neither is an end, but only a means. "It grieves my heart," cried Addison, "to see a couple of proud, idle flirts sipping their tea for a whole afternoon in a room hung round with the industry of their great-grandmothers." Now this comment, surely, represents a most unwholesome frame of mind, subversive of that relaxation which Delsarte and many charming women disciples have bidden us cultivate.

Alas! it would be a good thing if sipping tea for a whole afternoon in one room were the worst sin practised by our young women. Sipping tea in a dozen rooms on the same afternoon is surely a worse matter. In the days when people gave up a whole afternoon to a call, conversational stitching and tea drinking were reduced to a science, and gossip to a fine art. In a later day, when the author of the Synthetic Philosophy found occasion to marvel over and to lament the velocity with which men and women were going about their affairs in this country, calling customs had utterly changed. If our women had undertaken to perpetuate throughout the year the New Year's Day habits of the sociable Dutch of Manhattan, they could not have been more successful. The potency of pasteboard and the human imagination have not greatly diminished the pressure, and will not so long as the intoxication of mere rapidity continues to preserve its power. The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table has colloquially expressed the distressing celerity with which certain classes of fashionable women rush in, laugh, talk, eat and disappear, in the tersely alliterative "giggle, gabble, gobble, git."

These habits are, of course, utterly destructive of good talk. Modern society talk under the pressure of numbers and a consent to oscillate violently, is like the scattered fragments of a word game. A man — I cannot speak for a woman — emerges from a "crush" with fresh emotions

Gossip

toward the grotesquely ironical definition of words as the vehicle of thought.

However, I am glad to think that Miss America does not seek to revive the spectacular talking such as women did in the days of the old French salons. A woman talking to a dozen men at the same time may have been a charming affair. Mme. Récamier is credited with having done it very well. But no sane and truthful man ever will admit his contentment with the microscopic fragment of a woman's attention. Exclusive interest in a woman is undoubtedly a primitive instinct, yet the great deference paid to success in the *tête-à-tête* well may justify this instinctive preference, and those hostesses surely will be most successful who devise some liberty for this instinct. The tendency of our social life is doubtless against centralization. There can be no more monologists, it seems. "The worst of hearing Carlyle," said Margaret Fuller, "is that you cannot interrupt him." The modern social gathering, whatever its aims or variations, is quite sure at least of this quality, — that it will interrupt. We cannot deny that even "One-Minute Conversations with Nice Girls" is an experience having its compensations as well as its drawbacks, for while a few eloquent seconds with many women may not be so desirable in some ways as many eloquent seconds with one woman, it always must be difficult to know beforehand just when this will be the case. Mr. Warner has shrewdly

pointed out that some women are interesting for five minutes, some for ten, some for an hour; "some," he adds, "are not exhausted in a whole day; and some (and this shows the signal leniency of Providence) are perennially entertaining, even in the presence of masculine stupidity." The trouble is (as you might guess) that the interruption always cuts you off at the end of three minutes with the girl who would be interesting for a whole day. For aught I know, society may have averaged this thing, and have discovered that the low limit is safest, that it leaves both parties most completely in possession of the benefit of the doubt. But how few men can start a new conversation every ninety seconds with anything like the success that attends a woman's efforts to do the same thing?

No, woman, who created Society with its capital letter, has succeeded, whether by design or accident, in producing a situation in which she is placed at a very definite advantage. She can riddle a man with deadly small shot before he can roll up his heavy guns. Yet she never will like the man who either refuses the close order or surrenders. She will like him best if he "puts up a good fight." If he stammers, she knows just how to deal with his broken English and keep him going. *Quot linguae, tot homines.* But you cannot multiply a woman that way. One language is all that she needs. Small talk is a large question. As the loose change of vocal currency, it is an indispensa-

Tea

ble commodity. The larger denominations are not available. As for cashing an intellectual check, good as your credit may be, it is out of the question altogether; and a wise man recognizes the fact that in the matter of this commodity woman is a banker who must always pocket a margin.

One day in a far Southwestern city the belle of the place drove me in a dogcart for a memorable half hour. She was no taller than I, but she wore a magnificent hat, one of those hats which even the girl could not make you forget, and as she sat on the "dinky," she arose beside me in a quelling contrast. The horse was a smart stepper (at least that is my confused impression), the road demanded a discriminating rein; but though we drove past the leading hotel in the crisis of the event, and drew the fire of a hundred eyes, that girl's delightful wit never faltered nor forsook her, that is to say, never forsook *me;* for, of course, I needed a helping hand. No man not specifically trained to it could gracefully maintain himself at such an altitude with any credit to his power of speech. When I recall that dashing day, the roll of the cart, the flutter of those lofty feathers, the firm grace of those little gloved hands, the healthy glow of the face I looked up to, I feel an accentuated humility, a deep conviction of my oral inferiority.

In society, as elsewhere, woman often reminds us of her superiority to the algebraic axiom that things which are equal to the same thing are equal

to each other. There are qualified ways in which a man may be equal to society. But to say that he is equal to a woman — that is another matter.

You will remind me that society is not wholly a matter of talk, large or small. This is very true. Among other things, it is a matter of clothes.

# VI

## LACE AND DESTINY

VICTOR HUGO thought that "a book might be written with regard to the influence of gold lace on the destiny of nations." Carlyle wrote the book, extending his discussion to the influence of lace that is not golden on the destiny of society; and one may scarcely venture a few tentative words upon the subject of clothes without the feeling that he should, properly, apologize to "Sartor Resartus." And yet, as we have many reasons for remembering, there are new clothes, and if there is no new philosophy, it is not impossible that the old philosophy may have some new bearings, and that the new conditions, as sometimes happens, modify the application of the eternal verities.

Naturally one cannot throw out even a casual suggestion in such a matter without realizing that

we have gone very far from the primitive standpoint. When Adam told Eve that she looked lovely in green, the situation was strikingly different from any that we now can fancy, not only with regard to the lady, but with regard to the situation in general, for, as there could be no relativity in the sincerity of the compliment, there could have been no diffidence in receiving it. It is clear that either paying or receiving a compliment under such circumstances must of necessity have had an inferior excitement; yet we can have no difficulty in grasping the fact that between the primitive dress reform situation presented in the wilds of Paradise, and the highly evolved subtleties of modern dress, lie infinite ethical complexities, a pyramid of riddles, a Mammoth Cave of doubt. It having been established by centuries of habit that civilized men and women shall always wear some clothes, and most of the time a great deal of them, the question has not the simplicity which it might have had at an earlier time. Clothes principles are now as intricate as apparel itself. They are associated with ages of prejudice, libraries of history, acres of painted art, mountains of dry goods. On the other hand, certain notions now are entirely accepted, and the field for debate, after all, is much narrower than might at first appear.

It may not be amiss to remember the fact, flatly expressed by Carlyle, that "the first spiritual want of a barbarous man is decoration, as, indeed, we still see among the barbarous classes in civilized

countries." In women, dress is this "spiritual want" touched by artistic sentiment, I had almost said religion; and whatever we may say of the essential barbarism of the sentiment, it seems quite likely to prove one of those barbarisms that are fundamental and permanent. If we might remember that it is fundamental much of modern discussion would be simplified. I find Mr. Finck giving the following elements as explaining the Fashion Fetish: the vulgar display of wealth, milliners' cunning, the tyranny of the ugly majority, cowardice and sheepishness. These are all good explanations, but the list seems sadly deficient without an allusion to this instinctive and ineradicable desire for decoration. Mr. Theodore Child seems to have in mind the instinctive and final phase of the situation when he bids us "enjoy in imagination what the meanness of the age refuses to the desire of the eyes."

Woman herself seems to have adopted the view of Epictetus that "we ought not, even by the aspect of the body to scare away the multitude from philosophy." Socrates meant the same thing when he said to one of his too-ragged followers, "I see thy vanity shining through the holes in thy coat." Clothes, then, are not merely to warm or to conceal, but also to decorate. Wherein they warm or conceal, they are a science. Wherein they decorate, they are an art. The science is exact; the art is rich in variety and change, making every other art its handmaiden, every season its holiday, every

sentiment its theme. It is an art redolent of the years, tingling with the daring of youth. Above all, it is an art in which woman chooses to express herself in a language free from the inhibitions placed upon other arts, in which, ignoring when she chooses, the primary excuses and incentives, she takes an art-for-art's-sake justification for showing us the separate and independent fascination, in themselves, of sublimated clothes. No one who cannot perceive the inherent interest, if not the inherent justification, of clothes as clothes, ever can see deeply into the philosophy of dress, or ever can see deeply into the philosophy of women.

The wide contrast, and one growing continually wider, in the characteristics of masculine and feminine dress, on those occasions when it most definitely

expresses itself as dress, might suggest that some variation in the governing philosophy of each had taken place, perhaps at some definite time; for there was no such contrast in an earlier day. It may be that at the time — and we may set this early in the present century, easily within the period of our own national history — when man began to simplify his attire, to put aside all but the rudest decorative elements, woman definitely formulated her justifications for perpetuating the idea of clothes for clothes' sake. We are bound to remember what she has had to live down. She has had to live down Queen Elizabeth, and all the hyperbole of Continental fashion when Continental fashion was in

its most imaginative mood. Political traditions were not the only burdens of our ambitious young republic. Think of the gorgeous head-dresses, half as tall as the women who wore them, and which afforded such delight to the caricaturist! Have you ever stopped to think how few opportunities woman gives the cartoonist nowadays, how severe a strain she places upon his ingenuity? There may be an occasional note of excess. A recent foreign investigator found the clothes of our women too much so, too perfect for repose. This note of excess is the characteristic of genius. I myself have seen American women who, to a merely masculine prejudice, seem to be wearing too many rings. But we must make reasonable allowance for the natural accumulations of time. It has occurred to me that I might do as we may with a tree, — tell a woman's age by her rings.

So that in looking about and finding the whole of human society "hooked, and buttoned up and held together by clothes," we cannot hope in any successful way to investigate the matter, if we forget for a moment that the dress of women is to be looked at as a subjective element. Going a little way with logical analysis, and agreeing, for example, that "if the cut betoken intellect and talent, so does color betoken temper and heart," we soon meet with a mountain height of contradictions introduced by the purely personal effect of woman herself, and we find, long before attaining any symmetry of information, that woman has invested certain ma-

terial elements of life, as she has invested so many elements of life that are not material, with the interest she herself has for us. A little lace, a ribbon she has worn in her hair, a glove, a satin slipper, a fan, a shred of trimming, have an eloquence in their revelation of her, a fragrance in their transmission of her touch, which eludes logic and confounds investigation. By a faculty and privilege of making things seem reasonable that are not at all reasonable, by a witchcraft, a sophistry of fashion, a trick of illusion, in the presence of which we forget every rule of art, every principle of proportion, every prejudice of habit, she can utterly bewilder us in a master stroke of invincible instinct. She takes, deliberately and with exquisite selective tact, certain entirely simple, inoffensive elements, — things which in themselves you must acknowledge to be harmless and almost rational; she takes these simple elements and she puts them together by a method, and in a manner, of which no man, if he lived to be one hundred and eighty-six, ever would discover the secret, and, waving her wizard wand over the entire mess, she calls it a hat!

Nothing could be more preposterous, of course. When we study the thing as an object separated from her, it might, even though we knew that she had created it, excite our derision. But when we see this masterpiece of absurdity upon her head, that which had seemed at once an offence to nature and to art, the acme of decorative nonsense, immediately becomes forgivable — immediately becomes

right. It is not that we excuse it for her sake. It is not that the apposition dismays our reason. We bow to it, accept it, and end by perceiving that, whether it be taken as an old fact of nature or a new fact of genius, it is unanswerable.

No woman could be more completely, undebatably sane than the Professor. I know what I am talking about. And yet the Professor wears a hat. I had occasion, one day, when she had left it for a moment on a table, to study it analytically as a creation. It was a fearful and wonderful thing. No man ever can forget the moment when first, with mature deliberation, and in a consciousness of the vast significance of life, he takes up a woman's hat, timorously, as if it were a ten-inch shell or Minerva's helmet, and gazes into its fragile fastness. When I mentally grasped, as a man may in the absence of the wearer, the many and extraordinary elements of the Professor's hat; when I sought to associate its multi-colored grotesqueness with the classic simplicity of the Professor's pro-

file; when I figured its heterogeneous elements as an object of decoration for the Professor's outward and visible effect; when I fancied the Professor's brain flashing and glowing under this riotous symbolism, I was filled with a new sense of the futility of reason, a new awe for the wonder of woman.

Dr. Holmes has spoken of the hat as "the vulnerable point of the artificial integument"; but plainly he was speaking of the masculine hat, for woman's hat is no vulnerable point with her. It is her strong point, her point of vantage, the citadel of her sophistries. You can reason with her about other things, but you cannot reason with her about her hats; not, mind you, because she will not listen, but because she, or the hat, makes you not want to. This is not to say that it makes no difference who wears the hat. It does make a difference. Take a device like the calash, such as our great-grandmothers wore. There were faces that did not look well in it, faces which quite naturally might have made us think less well of the calash for the

moment. Under certain other circumstances — that is to say, over a certain other head, its quaintness begins to have a meaning, and it seems as natural and acceptable as anything else which the right face and the right person choose to display for us. Thackeray contended that sauer-kraut tastes good in Germany, and it is notorious that the bagpipes sound quite reasonable in Scotland. In the same way, there is no form of hat yet devised by human ingenuity that will not tempt forgiveness when it is on the right woman.

And woman herself quite clearly perceives the force of association, the importance, if the significance of the hat is to be preserved and understood, of keeping it on her head. If this were not so why should we be confronted with the monumental paradox that our womankind are keeping their hats on in church and taking them off in places of amusement? At the theatre woman consents to be separated from her hat, and to have her hat separated from her. At her devotions she is not yet willing to commit this discord, and in the dim religious light it twinkles and shimmers its owner's insistent dictum: The hat is the woman. In a thousand ways the hat declares the existence of occult meanings. A woman who would cut a man who wore a made tie, who would not buy a reproduced antique or pirated print, who knows Sèvres at a hundred yards and a real Bokhara in the dark, will cover her head with linen lilies and cotton-bloated roses. A woman who would hesitate to

put a jewel in her hair, will heap upon the dyed straw of her hat festoons of glass and steel and wax, with the fretted carcass of a bird.

After all, there is no occasion to take hats seriously, unless you happen to sit behind one, which, of course, cannot always be happening. They are a wonderful study; there are so many different kinds; they have been talked about so much, and have filled so large a place in our lives, especially in public audiences. They have been discussed as widely and as fervidly as the Federal Constitution. Because of them, men have passed laws and sleepless nights. Because of them men fought duels in the last century and lawsuits in this. To make it possible to have them more refulgent and fetching, husbands and fathers have worked on Sundays and stopped smoking. Though it has been assailed with fanatical bitterness, buffeted by satire, stripped by statute, stoned by envy, disciplined by reform, the hat serenely survives, a defiant catalogue of every trait for which it ever has been either praised or condemned. From out the din of conflict and discussion it rises unscathed and unashamed the proud emblem of woman's pictorial supremacy, which all nature has said must and shall be preserved.

And you know what she can do with a veil; she can make you forget that a veil is barbarous; she can make you forget that you should n't like veils, — she can make you like her in one. She can make it increase her effect of preciousness, if that effect is in

her line; or make it increase her sphinx-like effect, if that happens to be in her line. She no longer is extravagant in contriving them. Sarah's was to cost a thousand pieces of silver. She now is content to make it a direct and specific instrument of illusion.

If the late Mr. Darwin had given serious attention to veils he would have remarked that the wearing of them has developed new expressions of countenance among women. When they wrinkle, — I mean the veils, — the wearer has a way of pursing her lips to push the silken gauze free from the end of her nose, having accomplished which, her fingers gently pull the thing into subjection from the lower hem. At certain seasons and under certain conditions the habit is strangely general, until you might think that woman, like the novelist in his last chapter, is always drawing a veil. The more expert can pull out the wrinkles by supplementing the pout of the lips with an indescribable wrinkling of the nose, and without calling assistance from the hand. I do not suppose that girls are educated to do this in any particular way, yet the uniformity of the habit is little less than astonishing.

Speaking of uniformity of habit, I have observed the same thing about her back hair. The gesture of the fingers with which a woman readjusts a hairpin, or, perhaps, simply ascertains that it is doing its duty, is wonderfully similar among all women. Yet the gesture may to a singular degree be a reflection of her personal style, and in that latitude for purely personal grace you sometimes are brought to the compensatory fact that in sitting behind the hat you also are sitting behind the hairpins.

This crowning glory of her hair! How it has fluttered in song and story! How it has shimmered here in comedy and there in tragedy! How it has dowered and decked and framed her, and puzzled us by its mysterious fickleness of color, now this shade, now that, on the same saucy, shapely head! How quaint a picture she can make for us when she masks it in powder and carries us back to the days of Copley or Watteau! How it has served to remind us, in some forbidden dis-

covery of the crimping pin or the curl-paper, that from the beginning woman's pleasures and her conquests have not been unmixed with pain!

How much fashion owes to hair and hair to fashion! How inexhaustible are the harmonies of line of which it is capable! How fascinating, by association, are the combs, and patillas and wimples and ferronières which have caressed and curbed it! We no longer dye it blue as the Greeks did, though we still, as the Greeks did also, produce blondes at pleasure. Far be it from this page to express any preference as between blonde and brunette. If, as we have been told, all of the poets from Homer to Apuleius doted on blonde hair; if Aphrodite was blonde, and Milton's Eve; if Petrarch loved his blonde Laura (with crimps) and Boccaccio delighted in tresses of gold, who shall attach any more final significance to this than to the fact that woman at this moment is whimsically dressing her hair like Botticelli's Grace?

Reason does not meet these matters. "I am highly pleased," wrote Addison, "with the coiffure now in fashion." That is the ideal attitude of mind, a point of view above reproach. No man really is normal who does not think that "the coiffure now in fashion," yes, and all else in fashion that expresses the invincible instinct of woman, is peculiarly and especially likable.

"Professor!" I cried, in a moment of fresh and profound conviction, "I am assured that it is a measure of sanity in a man that he shall like woman in whatever she wears. She can confound our most precious theories by doing as she pleases in the matter of dress, for the effect is always right because she has produced it. It all is *her*. You might as well find fault with the shade of crimson in the feathers on the bosom of a robin as to find fault with the color of her hat or gloves. Some combinations make us wince when we first see them, and in the weakness of that moment we even may entertain a doubt as to the safety of the proprieties; but we come to excuse the doubted effects, and end by putting them into the very grammar of color. I have detected a score of instances in which woman, or fashion speaking for her, has met and turned the judgment of art. I have a theory that certain painter prejudices have simply been demolished by the instinct of woman."

The Professor was reading an exciting book on "The Evolution of the Vertebrata," and I knew it, but she was quite patient, and said quietly, "Those

are not the only prejudices that have been demolished by the instinct of woman."

"True," I admitted, curious, yet not disposed to challenge enumeration. "Do you know," I went on, "that your comment brings up an interesting question as to the effect upon woman herself of a pampered instinct. Will not the reckless gratification of instinct, charming as its effects may be, tend in time to differentiate her unfavorably? Though you meet vertebrata with your reason, when you turn your instincts loose upon millinery are you not vitiating—"

"*Will* you stop!" expostulated the Professor, "before both instinct and reason co-operate in boxing your ears? Prattle about a woman's instinct is a man's way of dodging admission of woman's subtler sense. If I actually had the time I should like to impress upon you the fact that dress is a department of the fine arts; that it has a logic and a language, priniciples, rules, functions, and a future. But that is another matter. Man is hampered by absurd prejudices as to clothes, especially as to the clothes of women. Our Concord philosopher remarked that the consciousness of being well dressed imparts a peace and confidence which even religion scarcely can bestow. Beneath the fact of this dependence lie emotions and impulses to which women yield frankly, but to which men turn a hypocritical squint. The candor of woman toward her clothes instincts does her good. A free, natural love of clothes as clothes is a sign of health in a woman."

"Professor, if I did not know how fearfully and wonderfully it was made, and how unpromising for the purpose, I should say that you were talking through your hat."

The Professor rewarded me with her choicest twinkle. "Well," she said, "I sha'n't be able to laugh in my sleeve much longer; fashion is making it tighter every day!"

"Can you not see," I went on, "that the tightness or looseness of a sleeve, for example, must have some direct effect upon the mental attitude of a woman? Are not these constant changes destructive of intellectual repose and progress? If dress is a language, how can you escape a resulting confusion in this instability?"

"My dear sir, that constant change of which you speak is not an instability, but a consistent and symmetrical ebb and flow."

"It may be pure curiosity, Professor, but even if Rosalind did not have 'a doublet and hose in her disposition,' it seems to me that we well may wonder how far the current bloomer affects the mind of the current young woman. It cannot be possible that so momentous and revolutionary a condition as the bloomer shall be without effect upon the mind of woman — and not merely upon the women who wear them, but upon the whole sex. It has been said that not only the physical structure but the character of men have been modified by the fact that men persistently avoid bagging their trousers at the knees. Will not the divided skirt divide woman's attention —"

"As for bloomers," said the Professor, "and all related forms of dual garmentature, I am going to lecture about them before the Zenith Club, and, if you are very good, when my paper is quite completed I shall read it to you. Meanwhile, I may remark that the bloomer is not 'current' at all, save, perhaps, in a modified and semi-visible way in partnership with an abbreviated skirt, — but this is anticipating."

## VII

## CHANCE AND CHOICE

A DISTINGUISHED general and admirable gentleman once was said to have lost the Presidency because he called the tariff a "local issue." It might be difficult for us to discipline Coleridge for calling love a "local anguish." Yet the plausibility of the statement should not defend the culprit. Love is, actually, not at all local, particularly when it is an anguish. It is immensely pervasive, an international issue, an inter-planetary, a universal issue. The light of love may be hidden under the bushel of modesty, yet its undaunted X-rays will penetrate the farthermost spaces.

But it is too late, or too early, in other words wholly unfashionable, to write about love, and I certainly should not have committed the offence of the foregoing paragraph had it not been for an entirely orderly and even timely thought as to the possibility that love, like any other malady or manifestation, might have a purely national flavor, not merely in its outward symptoms, but in its

inherent quality. That is to say, I had wondered in what way, if in any way, the American girl's definition of love would be distinctive. If I had asked the Professor, she would, had she consented to take me seriously, have described love as "the sum and sublimation of all possible inter-human attachments," or something of that sort. She would have been abstract, for woman, however personal she may incline to be by virtue of her sex and method, loves the abstract in definition for so much of reservation as it may leave to her. There is safety and breathing room in a large definition. Doubtless we never shall be able to get at Miss America's sentiments except in a purely empirical way, and if I were writing a treatise instead of setting down a few notes, I should have felt an obligation to study out the question by observing critically the conduct of the American girl in the processes of courtship.

The difficulty of such observation always must lie in the fact that the most interested man in any specific instance himself is wholly incapable of making report if he would. A man who could be analytical in any circumstances which included a settlement of his own fate, would be fit for every treason. He might go through a variety of mental motions which to him, at the time, passed for the convolutions of pure reason. He might, and doubtless often has, fancied himself as studying her, as penetrating the mask of her femininity, as dispassionately dissecting her sentiments. Indeed, every

prudent man must at some stage weigh, with whatever sobriety may be possible to him, the chances of what she will say; and this must always include some estimate of what she is thinking.

The relationship between what she is thinking and what she will say is one of the most complex in nature, and I fancy that in our climate and environment its fundamental complexity has been increased. I know that it is the habit of science to assume that the reason woman seems more contradictory than man is not that she is dishonest, but that she is impulsive. Impulse naturally is far less uniform than reason. "They change their opinions," complains Heine, "as often as they change their dress," a sentiment which proves conclusively that Heine had credulous intervals. A woman who always had the same opinion would instinctively realize the stupidity of that condition, as she would the condition of always being seen in the same dress; and if she did n't have a new opinion she might do with the old opinion as with the old dress, turn or cut it over. You cannot say from the notorious inaccuracy of a woman's gesture when she presumes to place her hand on her heart, that she has not a heart, that she is unaware of its precise location, or that it is not in the right place.

If a man means less than he says, and a woman always means more, we may see at a glance that it is easier to subtract than to add. But this is not the chief difficulty. A man, if I may be pardoned the dogmatism, always speaks in the original, while

woman must be translated, and it is vastly easier in any case, to translate his hyperbole than her meiosis. When woman was simpler, she had less of this quality. When she said no, and simply meant yes, man learned to translate and understand her. Even a man could work out by the least subtle of reasoning that when she said "No!" most fiercely she really was saying, "*Idiot!* why don't you *make* me say yes!" But after a time, perhaps because she suspected, for good reason, man's discovery of the cypher, because she saw that it was not enough to turn the alphabet upside down, woman began to qualify rather than to invert, and man was no longer in possession of the key. The whole arithmetic of the calculation was infinitely lifted, and rose from the rule of three into the higher realms of pure mathematics. If she *always* called him back he would know just what to do. If a little absence *always* made her heart grow fonder, the process was capable of exact and circumstantial procedure. But no longer is it so. She may, indeed, still mean yes when she says no. She reserves her constitutional rights. But to read her language now, to filch from her swift talk the true meaning, to trace in the deceptively deep stream of her feminine philosophy the faintly shining pebbles of pure fact, is a function calling out the highest that is in man.

In Miss America, then, we have this quality at its best, or its worst, as you may view the matter; and the quality in her is coupled with others that belong to her, and perhaps to her only. The degree of

independence which she has achieved has had a natural effect upon her relations to courtship. This independence has not merely accentuated the elusiveness which belongs to her as a woman. The quality of being hard to get is not new in woman, or in any degree original in any race. Ranging from the conditions in which barbaric woman is knocked down by the strongest bidder, to those in which she is knocked down to the highest, there is a uniform, because instinctive, outward habit of indifference or aloofness in the sex. But Miss America's independence affects the whole question of her choice and the method of her choice. And, committed as she is, by virtue of being a woman, to a vast and fateful chance, she has, more certainly than any other woman in the world, a choice. For good or ill, and in whatever degree social station and social habit may modify the practice, she has an actual participation in the forming of the matrimonial partnership. The world has seen marriage by capture, by service, by purchase, by social convenience, by free and natural choice. The experiment of marriage by free choice has received in our own country its fullest trial. Marriage by social convenience and by purchase still survive, even with us, and there are many among us who think that marriage for love may not be final as a national trait, and that we will discover that the compact of marriage, being in the interest of society and actually under the government of society should be made directly in conformity with the convenience of so-

ciety. Meanwhile, the trait is under scrutiny, the practice is under trial.

Marriage for love, is marriage in which woman is the arbiter, so that Miss America is carrying out, side by side with her brother's experiment in democracy, an extraordinary and unprecedented experiment in social practice. She believes, and reasonably, that Plato prophesied this system in his conservatively worded remark that "people must be acquainted with those into whose families and with whom they marry and are given in marriage." She believes that if marriage is to be "chiefly by accident and the grace of nature," it shall be left to her to illustrate the grace of nature. And most men who are candid with themselves know that while man may have the nominal initiative, she is in charge of the situation. There is a German saying that a man cannot be too careful in choosing his parents. It is equally true that a man can-

not be too careful in letting the right woman pick him out.

If I have been able to grasp it, the American girl's idea is that marriage is best when it is a cul-

minated friendship, that is to say, when it includes friendship. This is a new idea, of course, revolutionary in more than may at first appear. Indeed, we might more correctly call the American idea, marriage for friendship. Balzac has said a very

severe thing of love that does not include "an indissoluble friendship"; but it cannot be denied that we often are perplexed to see that in this business the greater does not always seem to be including the less. If the American girl shall succeed in definitely incorporating friendship into the essentials of marriage she will have accomplished a great triumph. "As to the value of other things," says Cicero, "most men differ; concerning friendship all have the same opinion."

If she shall succeed in making friendship an essential of marriage, Miss America will, indisputably, have founded the American practice of a pre-matrimonial acquaintance. We shall go on believing that when we meet her with a "Fate-cannot-harm-me-I-am-engaged" look, she cannot, as often happens in other civilizations, be in ignorance of his name. And we can see at a glance that by insisting that she shall *know* the man she is to marry, Miss America is assuming an intimate and personal dominion over courtship. She not only is assuming a power and a responsibility, but confessing the delicate truth of her individual jurisdiction. It will make no difference what formula she uses for "You may speak to father." The euphemisms behind which she now can hide herself are as diaphanous as her finest veil.

Yet, is there any to doubt her mastery of the situation she has invented? Is there any to doubt that in her new situation she has a new power? I know what has been said of the women who have

gone before. "And this I set down as an absolute truth," said Thackeray, "that a woman with fair opportunities and without an absolute hump may marry *whom she likes.*" And I do not mean, and perhaps should specifically protest that I do not mean, that Miss America is a whit more assertive in her selection than the women of whom Thackeray has chosen to say this much. But there is a sense in which Miss America, by virtue not only of peculiar privileges, but of peculiar endowments, is giving a new significance to courtship. Her attitude of mind is not to be confused with mere independence. We have many antecedent examples of independence. "At all events," wrote Mrs. Carlyle to her insistent suitor, "I will marry no one else. That is all the promise I can and will make." She thought that an agreement to marry a certain person at a certain time was simply absurd. Miss America's independence is the product of conditions which have produced a sex attitude of mind as well as an individual attitude of mind.

It has seemed as if the development of this sentiment, and the realization of responsibility, were making the American girl more conservative in certain ways, and that she was, in the matter of early marriages for example, drawing nearer to the older systems. Sentimentally, early marriages are a good thing. Perhaps they are practically also. Martin Luther and other wise commentators have pointedly advised them. But the century has scarcely offered approval. Stubbs, in his "Anatomy

of Abuses," complained bitterly that it should be possible for "every sawcy boy of xiiij., xvi., or xx yeres of age to catch a woman and marie her without any fear of God at all." Early marriages were a source of great complaint in our colonial days. Probably the caution of our young women is responsible for the fact, now frequently quoted, that early marriages are less frequent. At the first sign of a new caution there is always the alarmist who jumps to the conclusion that he is to be put off until the time De Quincey set for the amusement of taking home a printing press,—"the twilight of his dotage"; and it will be said of this or that section when some one is in the mood to say it, as Heine said of France in 1837, that "girls do not fall in love in this country."

Some characteristics of the era may not be attributed to anything that is new in our system. Flirtation, for example, is a very old vice. Yet, as every

calling has a conscience of its own, I like to think that flirtation has been harshly painted in some respects. If it does not show specific modifications in our longitudes, we must conclude that it is a necessary evil. At any rate we know from more than one biologist that flirting is not solely a human trait. This in a measure disperses and softens the responsibility. And one must not be hasty in marking flirtation. There is the seeming and the real, like true and false croup. Many women have been accused of flirting who were never more serious in their lives, just as we have known them to be cruelly accused of sincerity at a time when their whimsicality should have been patent to the least intelligent of observers.

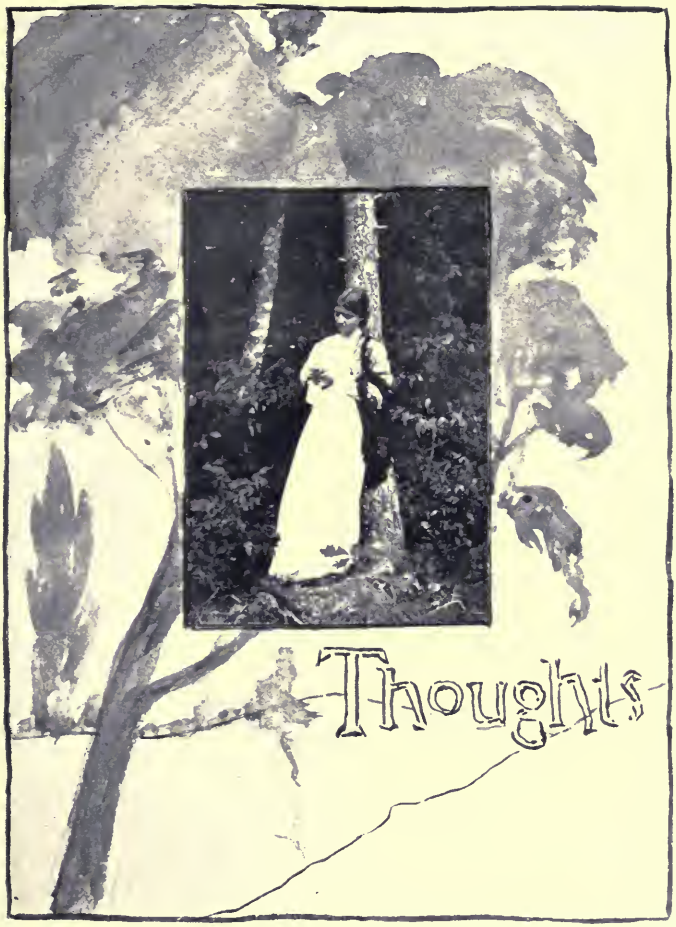
In an era when letter-writing is said to be dying out, it is not surprising that love-letters should come under suspicion. Indeed, there have been many temptations to cynicism. The law courts have been invoked to decide whether love-letters belong to the sender or to the receiver; nice questions have grown out of misunderstandings as to proposals of marriage. It is hinted that men are to become revoltingly crafty as to things put upon paper, and that the young lady of a not remote future will receive her lover's notes moist and blurred from the embrace of a copying book.

The general decrease in the quantity of letter-writing due, among other reasons, to the telephone, the trolley and railroads, and the increased rapidity of life in general, undoubtedly has influenced the

mere bulk of sentimental correspondence, though concrete instances are conflicting. One young man of my acquaintance writes to his sweetheart every day. Another, who has been engaged for some months, confessed to writing to the young woman (she lives in another city) once a week; "and do you know," he said, "I have a deuce of a time to find anything to say!"

Whatever tendency the American girl herself may be willing to foster or accept, it always will be true that the gift for writing the right letter to the right person is one of the most potent known to civilization. There are genuine, warm-hearted charming-mannered men who can write only a brutally dull letter, and there are reprobates who can fill a letter with the aroma of paradise. In an affair beginning with letters the reprobate must have the advantage. Indeed, I knew a girl who went on believing in the author of certain letters after the most disenchanting honeymoon that ever woman endured, after society had looked askance at her, after the towering lie of those letters had cast a blighting shadow across her life.

One pretty and pleasant little woman in Kentucky told me that when she was engaged she sometimes got two letters a day. And when we were married I missed those letters so!" And this was indubitably a happy marriage. I knew in just what sort of place those letters would be kept, and just how they would be tied up, and could fancy just how she would look in the dim of a rainy


Thoughts

day when she brought them forth and spread them out — by the cradle.

Who can tell what passes in the heart of a woman? Who can read her as she reads her letters over there in the corner of the summer hotel verandah? Who can say what she is thinking there in the shadow of the birch-tree picking off the petals? "He loves me — he loves me not" — no, surely something more modern. What could be more piquing than that partnership — nature and a woman? If she chooses to take another member into the firm, that is her affair. If she has a tryst, who shall have the meanness to wish any more or less than that he may not keep her waiting an unseemly time — or that she may not have followed a habit she has, and have gone absently to the wrong place? Yet she may have chosen to walk alone and to let the summer pass and the hectic colors of the dying season flaunt themselves in her face without giving a sign. Who can say what passes in the mind of a woman? When she opens the book of her own heart, and turns to the last page first to see how the thing comes out, is she not puzzled sometimes to find all the print running backward? Who can say, if a fairy came out of the wood, what manner of choice she would ask of that fairy, what fortune she would consider sweetest, what form of man she would ask for her Prince Charming? How small the chance that she knows what she wants, or that if she did know she would

regard it as safe and symmetrical not to ask for the opposite?

In the old romances the dead leaves crackled, and the cavalier of her dreams whispered the soft right word in her ear, and she murmured "Yes!" spelling it with two letters and a capital N as in the present hour. Would the gallant of the past be to her liking to-day? Would she receive him civilly, or would she tease and taunt him in her provoking modern way, abusing the qualities she liked in him, sending him away because she did n't want him to go, telling him that he should never win her because she had begun to fear that he would?

Neither the brusqueness nor the diffidence of the Puritan lover would be likely to please her. The Puritan lover would lack a great many of the qualities she now admires in men, chief among these, mayhap, the quality of not being too solemn. She is far from Puritan severity herself, and she would, I fear, see him go with a sigh of relief. In the quality of not being too solemn, she might find the beau of Louis XVI.'s time more to her liking, though his eagerness to draw his sword for her would certainly make her laugh. She never would appreciate the romance of his dainty duels.

His pretty speeches would amuse her for a little while, but the man who flatters her nowadays must be a more expert artist to escape the mortal wound of her ridicule. In a later day compliment undoubtedly became more of an art, and the dude of the Directoire, whom you might have found in the quaint drawing-rooms of old Boston, or Philadelphia, or Georgetown, as well as upon his native soil, was an ingratiating gallant in many ways. He posed, because Napoleon was making it the fashion to pose, but he posed well, and he studied the best methods of saying caressing things without making them nauseatingly sweet. This art of compliment, of not saying the right thing to the wrong woman, nor the wrong thing to any woman, reached an interesting point of development in the contemporaries of Beau Brummel. Possibly Miss America would have liked a Beau Brummel in an artistic spirit, and Brummel had, as a spectacle, many traits of gracefulness and fascination. Her elusiveness would have piqued him and his not too grovelling deference would have made her think him an entertaining fellow. His dress was elegant without effeminacy, his hat was the most extraordinary yet

devised by the ingenuity of man — which itself should be a bond of sympathy. But hats pass away, and beaux melt among the hazy images in the tapestry of time.

Yet they are always with us. Every age has blamed its beaux for wanting the true gallantry of beaux in the past. We all have heard Miss America say, rather petulantly, that the days of chivalry are gone. Perhaps they are; perhaps our men give too little attention to the graces of life. But let us hope that the modern man is not always as satire paints him, that for the little shams of chivalry he has substituted some real essence of an even deeper homage.

And we must not forget, in considering courtship, that she, too, though she may not have greatly changed in fact, has produced an effect quite as puzzling as the change in man. One of the German painters, possibly under the influence of Sudermann, has shown the modern girl, assisted, and possibly instigated by Cupid, paring hearts with a knife. But this is an old partnership — Cupid & Co., Limited. I cannot say what sign the firm

puts up over the door in Germany. In this country it certainly should read: "Hearts extracted without pain."

Yes, she is cool. The caterer's sign "Weddings Furnished," does not, I fear, ever give her a thrill. She asks no one to furnish a wedding for her. She seldom appears to be in the mental situation described by the thought-curers as one of "intense expectancy." And she is, it must be frankly admitted, developing a keen, a disconcerting, critical sense, an inevitable result to be sure, yet carrying its own bewildering effects. This is the American spirit, the inquiring spirit, the tendency to insist upon the re-establishment of standards. The American girl always is in the attitude of being willing to admit the superiority of man — if he can prove it.

Here enters her Americanism. Her contention is that you cannot transmit relativity. She summons science to show that new criteria are necessary, and she continually is calling man into the lists to defend his titles, to repeat his victories, or surrender the trophies.

If you look at it squarely it simply is iconoclasm, a social form of image-breaking, the image in this

case being traditional man. Observe, however, that woman does not actually destroy the image. She tentatively takes it down from the pedestal. Who knows but that, having dusted it off, she may, after all, decide to put it back on the pedestal again? Meanwhile, man is under scrutiny. It is a trying moment. It is like an examination in a post-graduate course. The American girl is examining man for a new degree. And man has no choice but to struggle for it. He absolutely is without an alternative. He must face the most exacting social service examination ever imposed by human caution or sociological skepticism. To meet the test will be to wear a proud title.

## VIII

## THE NEW OLD MAID

THE complacence of the unmarried is regarded by many as one of the most distressing spectacles in modern life. Perhaps there is some resentment of this as an apparent lack of faith, or at least of hope; others may be inclined to add, of charity. Eliminate these from woman and it may be difficult to mend the situation by making her president of a kindergarten society.

It is natural enough that the unmarried woman rather than the unmarried man should be the particular mark for attack. There are obvious reasons why woman's resentment of the unmarried man should be concealed or disguised. Woman, outside the resolution committee at a suffrage convention, cannot gracefully seem to resent an impairment of the selecting instinct in man. Even though she were

quite securely removed from the possibility of social commiseration she always would be in danger of appearing to speak with something less than strictly abstract feeling. She knows her fundamental limitations in the casting of missiles, and the boomerang of personalities is least to her liking. To her, natural selection may begin to wear the appearance of a huge joke, an immense, fantastic contradiction. "This," she may say, "is natural, but it is not selection." Under the circumstances who can blame her if she resort to a paraphrase of evolution and bewilder man by an unnatural rejection?

Man's resentment is more vocal, and so often does it seem to be touched with real asperity that we well may feel that he has begun to contemplate the situation with more than a languid interest. I suppose there is a fair question as to who began it. Gallantry dictates that a man should neither admit nor declare that he did. The excitements of scientific controversy doubtless often cause the masculine debater to overlook this obligation. Certainly it often is beyond all dispute that the American girl has succeeded, with or without design, in affecting man with a definite awe, and it is claimed that, in certain quarters at least, this awe has resulted in making him afraid to marry her, which, if it were true, would have to be regarded as a calamity of the profoundest moment. To admit the existence of such a condition would be deeply humiliating, since it must belittle both man and woman, though it should be admitted that woman would appear to

better advantage as a creature that had frightened man than as one that had ceased to attract him.

As I said one day to the Professor, science is not treating us quite fairly in this emergency. "As a scientific person," I said to the Professor, "you will remember the things science once undertook to tell us about the great dualities. 'Witness,' said science, with not a glimmer of insincerity, 'the beautiful interdependence of the two lobes of the cerebrum! How marvellous is their union! Each individual in form and function, yet working in an eternal harmony. One cannot get along without the other. Let one side of the brain be hurt and the other droops in sympathetic inactivity.' This was lovely. It fortified every advocate of the fitness of marriage. 'Observe,' we could say to the skeptic, 'that this duality proceeds throughout nature. Interdependence is universal,' and so on. But what happens? Just as we have this impressive object lesson in good working order, along comes science, with a frown and a cough, to remark that it was mistaken in the matter of that absolute interdependence theory, that the brain lobes can, after all, each get along quite well at times without the other; that the injury or decay of one is, indeed, sometimes followed by a steady increase in the powers of the other, one taking up the functions lost or dropped by the other. Nor was this the worst thing that happened. You know well enough what they used to say about the marriage of the two lobes of the cerebrum by the *corpus callosum.*

The *corpus callosum* at least seemed secure. We could have worried along with the *corpus callosum*. We always could say: the lobes are highly independent in action, but they are firmly married by this wonderful ligament — if it is a ligament. Even this comfort is now taken from us. Science has just rudely snatched away the *corpus callosum*. 'The two lobes can get along without it,' grunts science. 'People have lived for years with no impairment of their brain power with a totally shrivelled *corpus callosum*.' It is hard to keep pace with these cynicisms of science."

"You simply have been punishing yourself for whimsical analogies," remarked the Professor dryly. "Moreover, you are quoting abnormalities."

"Alas, Professor!" I cried, "it makes little difference about the abnormality. Admit an exception and the law is dead. We could conjure with the law. What can we hope to do now? The American girl dotes on exceptions — especially on illustrating them."

"You must remember," said the Professor, her eyes glowing solemnly, and with the tone of being consciously judicial and at a great altitude, "you must remember certain facts about the selecting — the pairing — instinct. Now, in the case of man it is necessary that the selecting instinct be special and not general. So long as a man permits himself to think of woman as an abstraction, continues to admire ideals of womanhood and does not seek or is not drawn to seek charms in a particular woman,

he is likely to remain a bachelor. His instinct must be, and has become by centuries of custom, an instinct for specific selection. On the other hand, the instinct of specific selection so favorable to the man, is distinctly unfavorable to the woman — that is to say, unfavorable to the woman if we accept marriage as her natural destination. A woman who grows up with the habit of mind which predisposes her to search for a particular man, is likely to remain unmarried. To favor pairing in her case, the instinct toward marriage must be general rather than specific. A woman does not select a mate from all the men in the world, as a man is supposed to select a mate from all the women in the world. She selects from among those who ask her, or, at most, from the group which she may have attracted into debatable ground."

"But — " I interposed.

"Wait a moment," pursued the Professor firmly. "This is not to say that a woman has no actual right to a privilege of selecting quite as definite as that permitted to man. It simply is saying that under present customs an effort toward specific selection on her part is not favorable to marriage. There may, and probably will, come a time when custom will permit to woman a more specific selection, without hazard as to the chance of marriage, and without loss of status on her part in any resulting marriage."

"I am glad," I said, "that you have touched that point, for of course woman could not afford to

be specific at the loss of prestige. It seems to me that the present system gives an immense advantage to women, since, in any matrimonial emergency she may always retort, 'Nobody asked you, sir.' Man's initiative gives her the benefit of the doubt in all after judgments from the world; for if man selects her, and she accepts him or yields to his selection, and there should possibly be error, plainly, as with Mark Twain's mistaken lynchers, the joke is on him. She cannot escape responsibility, but her responsibility always is lesser, and all the privileges of reservation are on her side."

"My personal opinion," observed the Professor (I always accept this form of approach as a great concession), "is that she loses more than she gains by these conditions. It is generally believed that during the past century, particularly during the past half-century, woman, and especially the American woman, has been selecting more definitely than at any previous time in the history of civilized society. One result of the habit of a more specific selection on the part of woman is a decrease in the number of early marriages among women in circles or classes where these ideas prevail, and a general increase in the whole number of unmarried women. It may be that a further development of this instinct will still further decrease the proportion of the unmarried, unless custom shall so far modify the arrangement of marriages that women may more equally participate in the selection without, as at present, exciting the antipathy of society, or, as you

have suggested, destroying her prestige under the partnership. There is, of course, no final reason why matrimonial partnerships should not be arranged upon a basis of as perfect equality as any

other partnership. It simply is a question of instinct on the one hand and expediency on the other."

I quote the Professor's opinions here with especial gratification, since in this instance they seem

triumphantly free from sex bias, — a freedom which, indeed, is a growing trait with women. And there is something not always comfortable in the sign. Is the time coming when we no longer can say, "Just like a woman"?

Perhaps we may discover that sentiment has more to do with the case than has been supposed. If the progress of education has menaced sentiment, who shall say that the greatest of sentiments may not be the first to suffer? Nothing is truer than that all women are not equally capable of sentiment. Some women seem to like the symbol of an emotion quite as well as if it were the genuine article. To them the innocuous make-believe of love is quite as satisfactory as the real thing. They play with a great sentiment as they used to play with their dolls, which gave much less trouble than real children and furnished just as much sentimental excitement as if they actually had been alive. I suppose this is particularly true of imaginative women, who know how to drape their souls in nun's garb and let their fancy play the devil. Their character is illustrated by the modern fashion which permits them to wear gowns sombre to superficial observation, but which, you may have the opportunity to discover, possess a riotously crimson lining.

What is to happen to the world if women are to acquire a fondness for the mere symbols of sex, if femininity is to become disembodied, is a vast and vital question which prudence well

might refer to one of their own eager and tireless committees.

The other day I boldly put the thing to the Professor. "What," I asked, "is going to happen to the world if the number of old maids keeps on increasing?"

"Well," mused rather than replied the Professor, "the present rate of increase in the number of old maids —"

"By which," I said, "I assume that you mean hopelessly unmarried women."

"I do not like that word," retorted the Professor, a little sharply, "it makes me think of hopelessly insane. I should prefer to say affirmatively unmarried — the present rate of increase in the number of affirmatively unmarried American women might suggest at the first glance that something very annoying to evolution was going to happen by-and-by. Indeed the conditions might seem to be positively detrimental to the Darwinian hypothesis."

"Not at all," I protested, "if you remember the married old maids. Their transmitted instinct is bound to count sooner or later."

"But I have no fear that anything absurd is going to happen." (I adored the smile of which the Professor was guilty at this point.) "Nature will work out the scheme. I mean supply and demand."

"I hope you cannot mean," I protested, "that the American girl has deliberately set about creat-

ing a corner in wives for the sake of raising the market — "

"Not precisely that," returned the Professor; "though in the evolution of altruism that might not be so absurd. But you must see that old-maidism will not flourish unless it advantages the race somehow. You cannot think that a girl would set about being an old maid for any other reason than to please or profit herself — "

"Unless," I said, "it were to get even."

"Get even!" laughed the Professor, "think of getting even by being odd! No. The American girl simply is experimenting in independence. If it pays, she will keep it up. If it does not pay, she will revert to the alternative."

"Yes," I admitted, "she always can do that."

"And meanwhile," pursued the Professor, "I insist that girl-bachelorism must not be considered as in any sense final. The suggestion that woman can get along without man is an impeachment of his charm and of her wisdom. One thing is always to be remembered: a man cannot reasonably expect to conquer a woman by not marrying her. If the girl bachelor does not know what is good for her, if her position is untenable, if she is losing precious time, a cynical attitude in the man bachelor does not seem at all likely to help the matter. The presumption that the American girl knows what she is about may be erroneous, but ill temper in the opposition will simply fortify her. She will smile and smile and be a spinster still."

A Spinster

# The New Old Maid

A spinster! How oddly the word sounded! How grotesque the contrast between the image called up by the name and the image that fills the eye of modern contemplation! The old maid of tradition has become a fantastic figure, as fantastic as if she had no actual successor — which possibly is the real fact, for old-maidism is not strictly a social condition but a state of mind. Nothing could better demonstrate this than the prominence and multiplicity of married old maids. It is a mere truism to say that old-maidism is not even restricted by gender. Who does not know the masculine old maid! He is an altogether different creature from the normal bachelor. Indeed, *he* sometimes is married. In this instance contemporary satire is entirely within facts; he alone is the new woman.

It is not always an easy matter to estimate or to define the effect of the new-spinsterism upon the mind of the opposition. If we were to judge from certain acrid comments, the new state of mind not only is more affirmative, but is vastly more aggressive than the old. A shrill tenor note here and there complains that the sopranos are sounding with an inelegant and disproportionate vigor. There is an ill-concealed admission that man in general is still wholly unadjusted to the affirmative attitude on the part of woman. Man cannot open the door for her or help her out of the coach unless she lets him precede her. The whole structure of gallantry is built upon her acquiescence in his leadership, — his giving upon her taking. If she is to ignore the

tradition of his leadership and goes forth upon her own account, what is to prevent the occasional, perhaps even the frequent, awkwardness of her actual leadership? And when she ceases to follow she already has begun to restrain. So runs the charge. You would think, to hear some people talk, that the modern woman should be indicted for delaying the males.

It is hard to live down a tradition. Take the tradition about the college girl, for example, the tradition that she is a sombre person, strenuous, unlovely, dominated by an ambition to subdue man and emancipate her sex by sheer force of learning. You can call up a picture of her at work, her brain throbbing with great thoughts, her face seared by study, greeting you with a smileless challenge to talk to the point, mostly in Latin, and with a decent frequency in quotations from Plato and Epictetus. This gruesome tradition makes her the pallid, gloomy, absorbed, spectacled member of the household, with a soul above clothes, glorying in unfeminine incapacities, shuddering at fashion magazines and peevishly rebuking the frivolities of girlhood. She uses vast words, communes with literary gods, and stands forth as a sort of Book in Bloomers.

This, I say, is the college girl of tradition, of the older comic papers. But what is the simple fact? — no, I cannot say the simple fact, for she is a fact of the most complex variety; what, rather is the literal, photographable truth? Very different, surely from the absurdities of satire; in fact, simply

THE COLLEGE GIRL of SATIRE

# The College Girl of Fact

the American girl, alive to all of life, woman first and student afterward, continually up to the mischief of teasing the social scientist by being lovely and actually marrying, college education and all!

Yes, we are making some new traditions. The new old maid is a charming perplexity. The old maids of the past read Plato together and established Boston marriages. They read in Cicero and elsewhere that friendship is less undebatable than love. The traditional old maid talked about "the faded fire of chivalry." Like Walpole on his Paris journey, she "fell in love with twenty things and in hate with forty," which fully restored her equilibrium. Yet she did not "vow an eternal misery," nor grow combative at the thought that St. Chrysostom found woman to be a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination and a painted ill. She acquired a beautiful serenity. She could read Schopenhauer's proposition to rid the world of old maids by establishing polygamy, without even an audible snort of contempt. She filled her leisure by admonitions to younger girls as to the fathomless hazards of credulity. She was securely and splendidly detached.

Of the new old maid, variously titled, it is, of course, too early to write. Whether she is sweeter or the world less sour, there certainly is less antipathy between her and the world. Society certainly likes her. She has been discovered to be immensely convenient. She has no asperity. "It is not," she murmurs to man, "that I love you less, but

that I love my freedom more," for answer to which, man is sitting up o' nights in profound thought. She does not even claim that her mood is permanent. At the first feeling of heart failure she knows just when to appoint a receiver.

All women can fool us some of the time, and some women can fool us all of the time.

## IX

## "AND SO THEY WERE MARRIED"

ONE day when the Professor had called a bachelor a bird without feet, and I had retorted that an old maid was a bird without wings, the Professor remarked significantly: "the old maid at least settles better," and we fell to talking of settling as a proposition. Between the predicament of a bird who cannot fly and that of a bird who cannot alight, there might not be much of a choice, though the Professor did her utmost to prove that the bird condemned to perpetual flitting was in the more pitiful situation. But it occurred to me as significant that the man should dread to lose the

privilege of flight, and the woman the privilege of settling. I wondered if there was anything more in it than the accident of contention.

We had agreed with Tolstoi, that "nothing complicates the difficulties of life so much as a lack of harmony between married people"; we had agreed that much of complication arose from a lack of antecedent harmony as to the matrimonial proposition.

"Do you not think, Professor," I asked, "that much of the trouble comes — that most of the trouble comes — from the simple error of forgetting that an institution cannot be better than those who represent or expound it? Is there not a tendency, a very old one, doubtless, to expect that marriage, in itself, will somehow, transmute the participants? Can marriage be more of a success than people, or less of a failure than people? Marriage is a bond, with a benediction, if you like; but it is not a translation. Surely we cannot take from marriage more than we carry to it — unless it might be the reasonable and natural interest on the combined capital."

Seeing that I was entirely serious, the Professor said: "My feeling always has been that the chief reason for the want of success in marriage and the deterrent spectacle it so often has presented, is the tradition that any legerdemain of sentiment or ritual can make two people one. Understand me, I believe wholly in the ideal of a spiritual oneness. I have no quarrel with the Scriptures on that score. But we cannot walk the path toward a spiritual

oneness with our eyes shut, by lying to ourselves. The interests of two people may be one in the highest sense, they may have one aim, if they are absolutely congenial they may have one wish; but nothing conceivable under the sky ever can make them more or less than two people. The other day some of us were debating whether we should say 'seven-and-five *is* twelve' or 'seven and five *are* twelve.' They called seven and five here a 'singular concept' and some were for *is* in consequence. But at least man and woman *are*. One and one do not make one, they make two. Indeed, after marriage, the two are more definitely two than they were before. Personal sacrifice proceeds in the order of intimacy. Society is built upon individual sacrifice. Friendship lives by concession, and the intimacy of marriage carries to the extreme point the idea of inter-personal compromise, the recognition of the personality of another. To expect two people to lose, without effort, by the mere fact of marriage, the individuality which they had before the compact, is as absurd as it would be to take two clocks and tie them together with a piece of pink string and expect them instantly to begin keeping absolutely the same time. What would you find in the case of the clocks? They might be mated clocks, and on opposite sides of the room might pass for two clocks keeping precisely the same time. But when you put them side by side you would discover, unless they were supernatural clocks, that

they were running some seconds apart, and those few seconds would be as potent in visibly differentiating the clocks thus married as a full minute or more would be on opposite sides of the room. So that when two lovers, who have made elaborate concession to each other before marriage, anticipating each other's desires, yielding to each other's prejudices, proceed after marriage to throw the whole burden of preserving harmony upon some vaguely defined potentiality in the marriage relation itself, they certainly are tempting Providence into impatience. It is the lesson of sociology that man must pay something — yield something — for the companionship of the other man, and the closer you wish to be to the other man the more you must pay, the more you must yield. When it comes to the companionship of the man and the woman, and when the woman receives or demands equal rights and privileges, the need of concession is vastly complicated, for now the association is not only between two persons but between two sexes; there is both the individual equation and the sex equation."

"Should you not be afraid, Professor, to take away this illusion? Should we not be striking a further blow at marriage if we withheld from those about to marry the hope, false though it be, that something beyond themselves is going to bestow its benediction upon marriage?"

"I cannot agree," protested the Professor, "that any kind of ignorance can be a good thing in

the end. Moreover, I think this false hope, after doing little good, does a vast deal of harm. The trouble comes when the two who are married, and who have looked for this magic, find it not, find that they still are two; and when they are three, the momentous equation must be carried forward."

I suggested that probably there was no sex in the illusion, that the man and the woman were alike sentimental in the matter.

"Probably," admitted the Professor; "but as woman suffers the more by it we are likely at times to think that her illusions must have been deeper. I think the American girl has fewer illusions than some others, and I think that somehow she is going to work out a higher plan than the world has had the luck to exploit hitherto."

"Let us hope so," I said fervently.

The Professor turned quickly toward me. "Not," she said, "that I think that marriage has been, relatively, unsuccessful with us. The American marriage has come nearer, in my opinion, to being a happy marriage than any yet invented. The very development of the divorce system, monstrous as that is, shows that nowadays and hereabouts people are beginning to insist that marriages must be happy. Both before and after marriage the American girl is asking fair play."

"Fair play!" It was like the Professor. It was the Anglo-Saxon of her. Fair play — even in marriage. Applause to the sentiment! If Miss

America stands for anything, if she personifies anything, I suppose it is social fair play. Sometimes woman seems to be asking a great deal, like the politicians, on the theory that nature is a reform administration and will cut down the appropriation. But whatever we may think of this, Miss America certainly is showing the influence of large concessions. I scarcely think that investigation will indicate that she is at all sordid. If her personal jurisdiction has thrown upon her the need to know about a man's income, we must not despise the candor of her investigation. She may not agree with Perdita that "prosperity's the very bond of love," but she has seen the miseries engendered in marriages for money by lack of love, and in marriages for love by lack of money, and she perceives that money has caused the trouble in either case.

If marriage is a lottery, we may note that this is one of the reasons for its popularity. The gambling instinct is strong in the human family, and I suppose that if marriage were a sure thing it would appeal to many with inferior force. It was a pretty Texas girl who said: "This lottery suggestion introduces a sort of sporting element into marriage that makes it fascinating. Marriage is the greatest game of all." And quite plainly she was no cynic.

But women are not such good gamblers as men. I fancy that is one of the reasons why they turn to the last page first. They do not like uncertainties, though they can create them. They will even marry to get at the end of the story.

It is plain enough that Miss America is not losing her sentiment. She can never lose her sentiment while she retains her superstitions. I do not mean to say that she countenances the cheaper superstitions. When I see a woman get off a street car because it is numbered thirteen, or witness the spectacle of a hundred busy shoppers, eager to get somewhere, held at a corner by an interminable funeral, because they dare not cross between the carriages, I accept that safe inference, dear to all patriots, that the victims are foreign. In what we might call the higher superstitions she is versed and even proficient.

Speaking of superstitions, no better name belongs to that prejudice by which it sometimes is held that Miss America is often too tall to pair well, that the bride is not exemplifying a proper proportion. Who shall challenge the processes of evolution? Who shall say that in a wiser era folks may not like the new proportions better? Probably there is no occasion to worry. In this Darwinized era we cannot be persuaded that she very well can get to be taller unless she wants to be, or unless she is preferred that way. If gallantry lags, patriotism will insist that the more we see of her the better we like her.

Did you ever see a bridal scrap-book? A Tennessee girl, wedded a year, unfolded one for me, and it proved to be a wonderful affair. In the early pages were pasted invitations, dancing cards, concert and theatre programs, tinfoil from bouquets,

ribbons from gifts, valentines and a curious miscellany of souvenirs. Then came the cover from the box that had held the engagement-ring, a copy of the wedding invitation, newspaper comments on the engagement and the wedding. Later pages held a railroad map showing the wedding journey, Pullman car vouchers, express labels, hotel menus, miniature camera "views," with much more that I cannot remember. And on a certain page of this scrap book, reserved somehow, for the purpose, all of the guests at the wedding had written their names. A few months after the wedding the husband fell ill, and at the crisis his young wife chanced to find that the list of names in the book omitted, among all of those who were at the wedding, his alone. She was not superstitious, but the absence of that name filled her with a new terror. The thing preyed upon her, and in the still of night she slipped into the sick-room with book and pen, and taking her husband's unconscious hand, she traced his name there upon the right page. He did not die, and when, one day, he came upon the tremulous lines of that grotesque autograph, he did not chide the forger.

We may have changed the names of some things, the cool breath of realism may have touched the habits of our modern life, but probably the heart-beat of sentiment to-day is not greatly faster or slower than in the long ago. There was a noble tenderness and dignity in some of the formalities of the past, as when John Winthrop began his letter

with: "Most kinde Ladie, Your sweete lettres coming from the abundance of your love were joyefully received into the closet of my best affections."

We do not say, "My only beloved Spouse, my most sweet friend & faithful companion of my pilgrimage," but let us hope that nothing of the intrinsic beauty of love and marriage has suffered any real loss.

Distrust those who seek to show that there is a discordant note in the old tune of love. Distrust those who claim that the old harmonies have been superseded, that the new chords are less sweet than the old, that the eternal duet which has tinkled and murmured down the ages ever will be ended. The strings and the keys are new, but the tune is the old tune. All the new notes and the new titles, and the new words are but an obbligato, an ornament to the love-motive glowing like a golden strain in the majestic symphony of life — the recurring melody always new, always old; always a surprise, always as certain as spring; so conquering in its power that Miss America, with all of her self-reliance, with all of her assumed superiority to wizard wiles and incantations, falls under the spell and has no regret. She is as willing as ever she was to sit at the feet of the right man. She knows her woman's power. She is as willing as ever to follow a leader. She only asks that she may elect her leader, not with a ballot, but with the benediction of her love. She knows, with her truest insight, that there is no device of science, nor ideal of sentiment that ever has been or ever can be a substitute in this world for the love of one man for one woman and of that one woman for that man. She sees down the long road of life, alternating patches of sunlight and shadow, chances of trial, certainties of pain, but she sees no cowardly doubt of the nobility and the triumph of her free choice. The snows of time will whiten her hair, and what better fate

can she ask from the giver of gifts than that she may sit there, as in the other years, beside her re-elected leader in some hour of peaceful communion; to look back on the paths of their journey, and forward over the long road, recalling the joys and sorrows of the pilgrimage, and realizing here as at the beginning that the stoutest defence against the shafts of fate is the divine ægis of love. . . .

The Professor had come into the room girded for one of her intermittent departures into the outer world. I thought then, and it has seemed to me since, that she never presented a more agreeable spectacle than at that moment. She dawned so radiantly there that I never could remember what she wore, save that it was a new gown with a pale becoming pink somewhere.

"Professor," I said, helpless before her discovery of my glance, "woman is the only product of civilization which we might praise to excess, if we ever found the words, without critical resentment."

"You always are either rampantly sentimental," she said over the last button of her glove, "or remorsefully satirical."

"I protest, Professor, that now I am neither. At this instant, Professor, you are reminding me anew of the infinite variety of woman. It may be that there is something in the raiment, but you, quite typically, I fancy, burst upon me in fresh phases, fresh flavors. A man is a mixture

to be sure, a medicine, if you like, or a mixed drink. But a woman is a *pousse café*, never twice the same nectar, and one drains the glass delighted and confused."

"I have no means of estimating your comparison," returned the Professor, "for I never tasted a *pousse café*. I fancy it is degenerate."

"Should you ever test my symbolism, Professor, you will, I think, admit that it is more accurate than Thackeray's comparison of a woman's heart with a lithographer's stone. 'What is once written there,' he says, 'never can be rubbed out.' Now if Thackeray had known anything at all about lithographers' stones, he would have known that they are used continuously for new writings until they have become too thin for service. Thackeray would have given woman more of the benefit of the doubt if he had called her heart a palimpsest. You sometimes can make out something more than the very last writing on a palimpsest."

"I am afraid," murmured the Professor, with a glance that puzzled me, "that you would not be able to read even that last writing."

"Alas! Professor, I never have boasted any dexterity as an expert in love's handwriting."

"You are a man," she said briefly.

"Is there a last writing on your heart, Professor?"

"Yes," she answered, a little startled, yet speaking quietly, "there is a first and a last in one, and the ink isn't dry, either."

"You don't mean — "

"Yes, I do," she added firmly; "I have been intending to tell you about it."

"You are — not going to be — married?"

"Yes."

"Professor!" I had breath but for that one gasp. "And you never said a word!"

"Yes, I did — to him." Then, seeing my look, "I wanted to tease you a little; but I am going to tell you all about it — very soon."

"I suppose," I said, after a pause, "it is that fellow who was hurt at Santiago?"

"The very same."

There was a little awkward silence. Then I arose and stood near her, and she glanced up at me with a droll, fluttering smile. "Does he understand women?"

"No," she replied softly, yet with some of her old spirit, "he isn t so foolish as to try. He only understands — me."

"Oh," I said.

It was dusk. Somehow the moment was like the end of a chapter. A strange thing had happened, and the Professor — Who can describe that change which follows the oldest and newest of miracles? It was not the same Professor who shimmered there in the twilight. . . . No, not the same. Something had gone. And there was a new light in those dauntless eyes.

A little later I saw her at the door, her little gloved hand cajoling for a moment the rebellious bronze of her back hair. I saw her through the window as on the steps she gathered the loose of her gown, flashing the fire of her flounce lining. I saw her flicker for a moment in the windy street. And she was gone.

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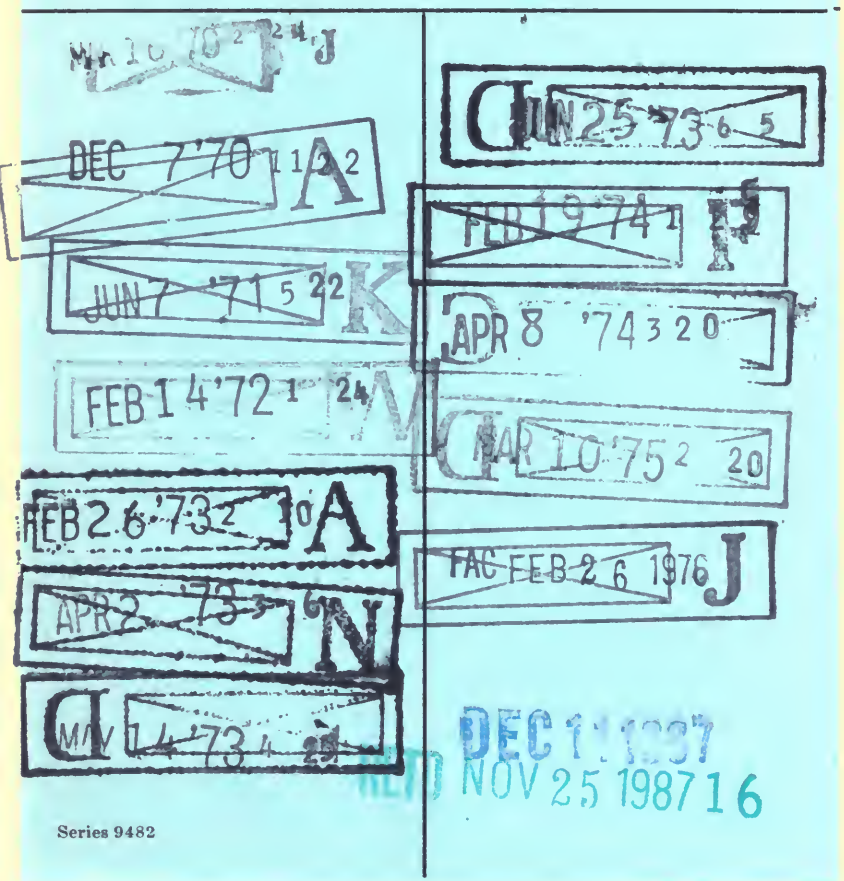


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